PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
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WHAT'S AT STAKE IN BARANGAY POLLS

By Cyril L. Bonabente and Eliza A. Victoria
Inquirer Research

BENEFITS—INCLUDING BONUSES, INsurance coverage and a sense of power—come with being an official in the country's smallest political unit.

Aside from the honorarium a barangay official receives (not less than P1,000 for the barangay chair and not less than P600 for each of the seven regular barangay council members and the Sangguniang Kabataan chair), he/she is entitled to:

- A Christmas bonus of at least P1,000.
- Insurance coverage (includes disability, accidents, death and burial).

WHAT'S AT/ A8

SPORTS / A27

Miñoza ends title drought in Japan; Pagunsan breaks thru

WORLD/ A26

Turkey threatens incursion into northern Iraq

MANILA poll workers transport ballot boxes to precincts for today's exercise. JESS YUSON

51M expected to vote today

By Inquirer Bureaus, Nikko Dizon and Leila B. Salaverria
in Manila

ONE CANDIDATE IN ALBAY IS NAMED EDU Manzano, but he is not the one you see on television crushing pirated discs. Another aspirant in Mindanao goes by the name of Erap Estrada, but he is far from being a convicted plunder.

In Catanduanes, an entire family is running for seats in separate villages.

In the Visayas, Commission on Elections computers stumbled upon the name of a school teacher running for three positions in three different areas.

Predictably, politicians in some villages are buying votes at the rate of P400 to P500 per ballot.

These are only some of the problems—and oddities—that the Comelec is expected to encounter as the bulk of the country's more than 51 million registered voters trek to the polls in nationwide barangay and Sanguniang Kabataan elections today. ***(See related stories in Metro, Page A23.)***

Since yesterday, the Philippine National Police has been on the highest security alert, warning the elections could be disrupted in some places by communist New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas said to be backing some candidates.

About a million candidates are vying for nearly 672,000 posts in some 42,000 barangays.

PNP Director General Avelino Razon Jr. said the police were verifying intelligence reports that

51M EXPECTED/ A8

FAST FACTS

Total No. of barangays:	41,994
Total No. of registered voters:	51,347,905
For barangay polls	48,192,979
For SK polls	3,154,926
Positions at stake per barangay	1 barangay captain, 1 SK captain; 7 barangay kagawads; 7 SK kagawads
Total No. of precincts	373,980
For barangay polls	319,570
For SK polls	45,410
Biggest barangay (population)	176, Caloocan
Population	188,419
Households	38,000
Smallest barangay (population)	Concepcion, Bacolor, Pampanga*
Population	10
Household	1
Richest barangay	Bel-Air, Makati City

*Affected by lahar. If not, the smallest barangay in terms of population is Brgy. 5 Poblacion, Porao Island, Roxas, Palawan (with a total population of 12 and 3 total households

SOURCE: NSCB, CENSUS 2000, DILG, COMELEC
COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA INQUIRER RESEARCH

Estrada backs away from GMA-quit call

Rejects bid to set up transition government

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada yesterday distanced himself from fresh calls for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo sparked by the pardon she had granted the disgraced leader convicted of plunder.

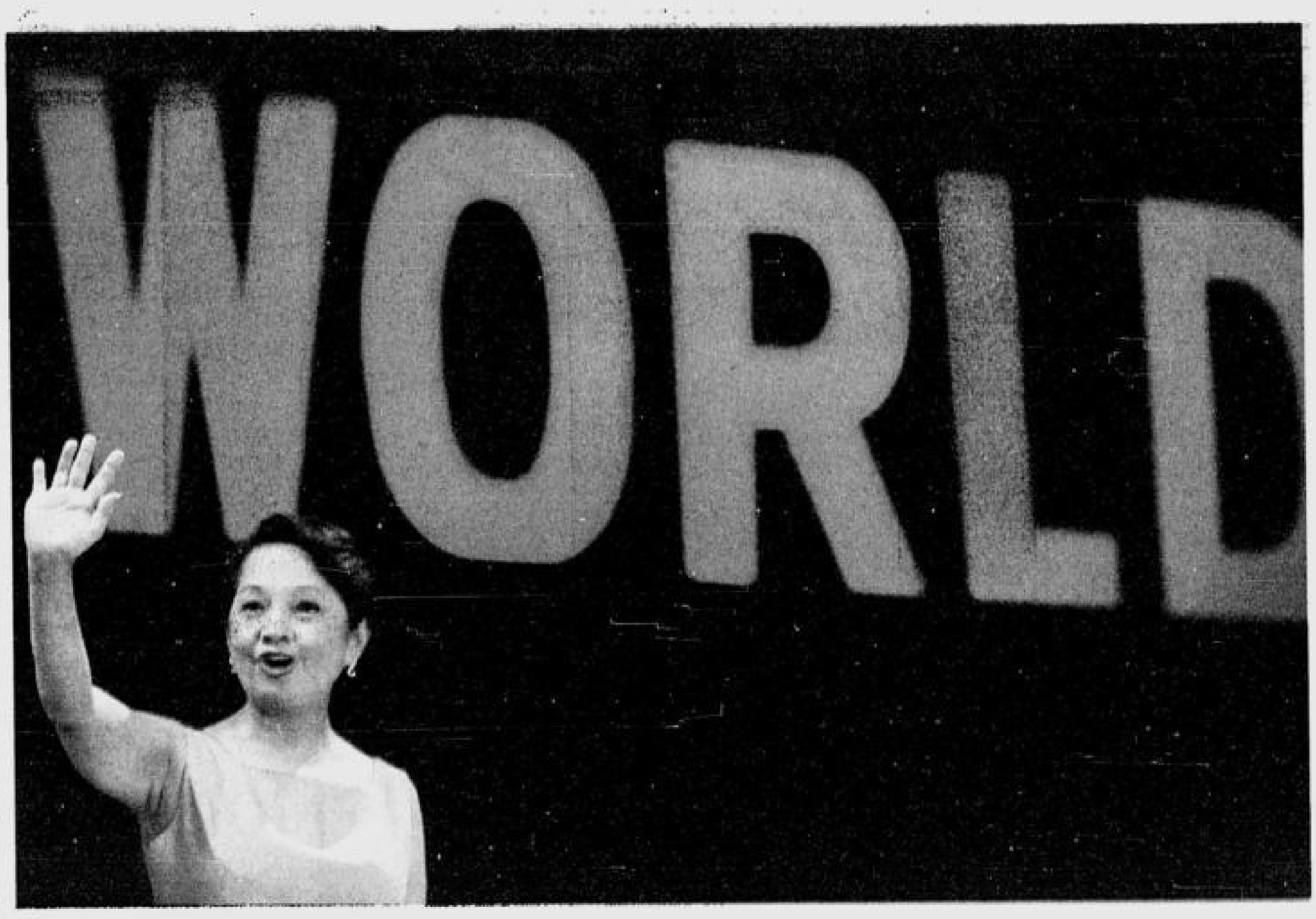
"It's the people—the poor sector which is the largest part of our society who should choose and decide who they want to run or replace the government, not the few elitists and the churchmen," Estrada told the INQUIRER by phone.

On Friday, the ousted leader was given a new lease on life and walked out of his sprawling Tanay, Rizal, vacation house, where he had spent most of the six years he had been under house arrest, a free man after accepting executive clemency.

The pardon, which both the Estrada and Arroyo camps cited as a step toward national reconciliation, has triggered calls among civil society groups and political and church leaders for the removal of the President and the setting up of a junta to be headed by Chief Justice Reynato Puno.

A Puno-led transition government also does not appeal to Estrada, who said that the nation would only tumble into the same pitfalls of the military-

ESTRADA / A17



WOMAN ON TOP
President Macapagal-Arroyo greets the audience during the awarding ceremonies in Gawad Kalinga's search for the most inspiring entrepreneurial communities held yesterday on the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay City. LYN RILLON

Erap pardon could lead to fall of President

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE ABSOLUTE PRESIDENTIAL PARdon granted to former President Joseph Estrada put a formal closure to the most celebrated corruption case ever faced by a Filipino president after Ferdinand Marcos.

With the pardon, the saga of Estrada's fall from power that started with his impeachment in Congress in October 2000 came full circle. It also created a new political storm that threatens to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

When the political history of the country in the first two decades of the 21st century is written, it will be defined by the intertwined fates of two presidencies—that of Estrada and of Ms Arroyo.

Estrada's fate was sealed by corruption; Ms Arroyo's hinges on a similar issue. Both presidencies are two sides of the same coin. Neither presidency can claim moral ascendancy over the other on the corruption issue.

While it was the Arroyo presidency that initiated the first plunder case against Estrada, she also cleared Estrada of the criminal stigma of corruption with the absolute pardon.

The executive clemency allowed Estrada to escape the ignominious fate suffered by Marcos.

Marcos fled in February 1986 before a successor government could organize corruption charges against him, and before an angry mob that stormed

ERAP PARDON/ A17

HAWAII WARNING CENTER

Scientists scan world for tsunamis

By Tarra Quismundo

EWA BEACH, HAWAII—IT HAD BEEN quiet for days in this part of Hawaii. Scientists at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) were on routine watch of seismograph and tide readings from around the globe on a typical sunny morning.

In a snap, the drone-like whir of computers and the casual click of keyboards were overtaken by the staff's beeper alerts that frantically sounded off every minute. Telephones rang right after they were hung up, and computer screens were updated almost every second.

A massive earthquake had just struck off Indonesia's Sumatra island, and the scientists were racing against time to warn coastal areas of a tsunami if deemed necessary.

Seconds had never been as precious. It was the lesson the world took from the Indian Ocean tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004, when close to 300,000 people were killed or went missing.

"This is unusually large … this happens around every 10 days … Last week was very quiet. We had very few events to respond to," geophysicist Gerard Fryer told reporters from Southeast Asia who happened to be at the center at the time of the quake.

"There might be aftershocks from this event. So the next events will be easy to

SCIENTISTS/ A18

Unrequited love inspires cadet to win

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—IT was a love story with an inconvenient truth.

Cadet Second Class Emmanuel Absalon poured his heart out about unre-

UNREQUITED/ A10

Rebel soldiers offered jobs as VIP bodyguards

By Nikko Dizon

AFTER YEARS OF FIGHTING COMMUnist insurgents and Abu Sayyaf bandits, what do Army Scout Rangers implicated in a failed power grab get from the military aside from more than a year in

REBEL SOLDIERS/ A18

WOW, PARANG SI KEVIN COSTNER!

'Rido' worsens conflict in South, says study

CLAN VIOLENCE HAS AGGRAvated the conflict between government forces and Islamic separatists in the southern Philippines, making the decade-long search for peace there even harder, a new study says.

The study, released on Wednesday by the Asia Foundation, said the peace process in Mindanao, where Islamic separatists have been fighting for self-determination since the 1970s, would have a better chance of succeeding if clan violence were addressed.

The project's researchers, who included Islamic scholars and anthropologists, found that in Mindanao from the 1930s to 2005, there had been 1,266 cases of clan violence—called *"rido"* by Filipino Muslims—in which 5,500 people were killed and thousands were displaced.

While clan conflict is common in many societies, *rido* is an especially volatile force because it has, according to the study, "wider implications for conflict in Mindanao, primarily because it tends to interact in unfortunate ways with separatist conflict and other forms of armed violence."

The government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have been negotiating for peace since 1997, but no substantial agreement has been reached.

According to the study, half of

'RIDO' WORSENS/ A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/10/28/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FrontPage

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(In exact order)

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening

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SUPERLOTTO 6/49

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Nograles belies Palace loyalty check

'Malacañang meet was to show support for Estrada pardon'

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **MENDOZA** decries Senate treatment /A4
- **ARMY OFFICER** who died in Sudan to be honored /A6
- **AREAS AT RISK** of bird-flu infection listed /A9

By Norman Bordadora

AN ADMINISTRATION congressman said over the weekend that there was no need for President Macapagal-Arroyo to conduct a loyalty check among lawmakers in the wake of the alleged rift between her and Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Davao City Rep. Prospero Nograles issued the statement late Saturday after confirming that a group of House members without De Venecia went to Malacañang on Thursday to express their support for Ms Arroyo after she pardoned convicted plunderer, former President Joseph Estrada, earlier that day.

"There was no such thing as a loyalty check. The President knows in her heart who are the congressmen who won't desert her," Nograles told the INQUIRER.

About 20 House members reportedly trooped to Malacañang on Thursday evening. Earlier in the day, De Venecia's son and namesake, Jose "Joey" De Venecia III, had also testified against Ms Arroyo at the Senate.

The younger De Venecia said former Socioeconomic Secretary Romulo Neri had told him that the President wanted the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with China's ZTE Corp. approved even after he told her about a P200-million bribe offer made to him to approve it.

De Venecia also claimed that Ms Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, was promised a $70-million commission from the NBN deal by those pushing for the project, an accusation that the latter decried as a "fairy tale."

"(The meeting in Malacañang was) only upon the initiative of the congressmen who were in Manila and mostly first-termers through text messages only," Nograles said.

But Nograles, whose name earlier cropped up as a potential replacement for De Venecia should his rift with Ms Arroyo come to a head, said there was nothing about the meeting to hide from the Speaker.

"I myself sent text messages to congressmen including the Speaker. There was nothing to hide because there was no agenda about the House leadership issue. Like I said, we won't rock the boat," Nograles said.

He earlier said that the only way De Venecia would be replaced was if De Venecia himself allowed it.

Nograles, a member of De Venecia's Lakas party, reiterated that Thursday's meeting in Malacañang was "just to show support for (Ms Arroyo's) decision to pardon (Estrada). It was a pure show of support and a social dinner and drinks."

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Reform youth council, don't abolish it, says ex-SK leader

By **Cristina Arzadon**, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*, and **Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

LAOAG CITY—WHILE THE Sangguniang Kabataan elections today may generate little interest, this should not be a cause to sideline the youth from taking part in governance, the former national SK chair said.

"What we need is reformation [of the SK] not [its] abolition. The youth should be treated as partners, not merely beneficiaries, in implementing government programs," said Richard Alvin Nalupta, chair of the National Youth Commission (NYC) and president of the SK Alumni Association.

Nalupta said the SK is an avenue for the youth to ventilate their sentiments and, in the process, convince others to take action.

Republic Act No. 8044, or the Youth in Nation-Building Act, created the NYC in 1995 and established a national comprehensive and coordinated program on youth development.

Under the law, all youth programs and projects that government agencies implement are evaluated and monitored for their role in involving and enabling the youth as partners toward national development.

Nalupta, who is also chair of the committee on Asean youth cooperation, is a former SK president of Ilocos Norte. He headed the SK national federation for seven years.

Based on NYC's discussions among youth groups, the sector wants to play an active role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of government programs, he said.

Meddling politicians

"They don't want to be relegated to being fence-sitters or passive recipients [of programs]. The government should welcome this," he said.

"The SK was envisioned as a training ground for responsible leaders to hone their leadership skills. If they are exposed to corruption [in the process], it is because of the meddling of older politicians," Nalupta said.

He said a provision in the SK reform bill seeks to shield the youth from any interference by traditional politicians.

The bill also seeks to lay down the allocation of SK funds to specific programs with 50 percent to be used for district projects of a youth official while the rest would go to health, livelihood and anti-illegal drugs campaigns and capacity-building programs.

"We are also re-orienting the minds of local government [officials] and the community that the SK should not only be for sports tournaments," he said.

All nat'l roads clear for holiday – DPWH

By Margaux C. Ortiz

ALL NATIONAL ROADS HAVE been cleared of obstructions in time for this year's observance of All Saints' Day, the Department of Public Works and Highways has announced.

Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had instructed all DPWH regional directors and district engineers to conduct road maintenance work on national roads in preparation for the expected exodus of motorists going home to their respective provinces.

"The DPWH Lakbay Alalay program includes road maintenance work such as pothole asphalt-patching operations, roadside vegetation control and drainage declogging operations," Ebdane said.

Teams composed of DPWH personnel and mechanics will also be deployed to respond to road emergency situations. These teams will be supported by DPWH equipment and service vehicles which could double as tow trucks, he said.

But in the Cordillera, the Gonogon Section of the Mt. Province-Kalanan Road and the Saltan Bridge Section on the Calanan-Pinukpuk-Abbut Road were temporarily closed due to landslides caused by heavy rains, DPWH Regional Director Mariano Alquiza reported.

"Our heavy equipment and maintenance crew are now conducting clearing operations on the affected roads and we are expecting to make them passable by this week," Alquiza said.

He also advised motorists to take Naguillan Road and the Marcos Highway to get to Baguio City because Kennon Road is prone to slides due to the bad weather conditions.

In Central Luzon, DPWH Region III Director Alfredo Tolentino reported that the Barangay Villa Aurora section of the Nueva Ecija-Aurora Road was temporarily closed because of flooding.

Tolentino, however, pointed out that their maintenance operations on the Manila North Roadhad been completed.

DPWH Region IV-A Director Bonifacio Seguit, on the other hand, reported that the entire stretch of the Manila South Road (Quirino Highway) and Andaya Highway (Quezon side) had been cleared of all obstructions and were now passable to all types of vehicles.

As this developed, the Philippine Coast Guard has tightened security at all ports and ferry terminals nationwide in line with the Department of Transportation and Communication's Oplan Kaluluwa.

Dolphins to be bred in Davao S.

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A breeding station for dolphins will soon rise on Balut Island in Davao del Sur.

An investor from Iran, Foad Akhavan, has put in an initial P2 million to jumpstart the project, which is being undertaken with the local government of Sarangani town in Davao del Sur.

Sarangani Mayor Jerry Cawa told the INQUIRER that the dolphin breeding station was the first of its kind in Mindanao.

Cawa said he and Akhavan signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the project, which will be established in a 15-hectare facility in Sitio Bulayi.

"He told us he would be pouring in some P50 million when the dolphin breeding starts," Cawa said.

He said the project would not only help increase the dolphin population in the area, but it could become a tourist attraction.

Since the breeding station would need workers, Cawa said locals could find gainful employment.

He said Akhavan, a dolphin enthusiast, had noted that the dolphins on Balut Island belonged to one family and were people-friendly.

"Imagine watching a group of dolphins swimming with humans and leaping through the waves. That would surely catch the attention of tourists, especially nature lovers," Cawa said.

He said Akhavan was now trying to get breeder-dolphins so they could start the project immediately. *Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Senators treated us badly, says Mendoza

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FOR THIS BATTLE-SCARRED RETIRED police general, appearing at a Senate inquiry into the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) deal was a "harrowing experience" he is reluctant to go through again.

"We respect them (senators) but it should be mutual. You are a Cabinet secretary, not just somebody picked up from the street," said Transportation and Communication Secretary Leandro Mendoza in an interview with INQUIRER editors and reporters last week.

"They (senators) only want you to answer yes or no, they don't want you to explain yourself," Mendoza said.

Sad, sorry

Mendoza was relating his appearance at the Senate on Sept. 20 where he was asked to explain the government's decision to award the NBN contract to ZTE Corp. of China without a bidding.

"This is a different Senate. Sometimes you feel sad but I just tried hard to smile every time my staff looked my way. They have to respect us, we feel bad about the whole thing. That is our sentiment. Our purpose in going there was to clarify all issues on procedure and procurement," Mendoza said.

Mendoza said he felt sorry for Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos and Commission on Higher Education Chair Romulo Neri who were treated roughly by the senators when they appeared before the latter on Sept. 26.

Equal treatment

Aside from being skewered for his alleged wheeling and dealing in the NBN project, Abalos was also asked about an alleged extramarital affair. Neri, on the other hand, was besieged with repetitive questions by the senators who were dissatisfied with his answers, specifically on whether the President had ordered him to approve the NBN project despite the alleged bribe offer made to him by Abalos.

Mendoza said the senators should treat Cabinet officials as their "co-equals," being the "alter ego of the President."

When asked if he would attend the next Senate hearing, Mendoza said it would depend on the President.

Despite the avalanche of criticism that inevitably forced the President to cancel the ZTE contract, Mendoza said he continued to stand by his department's decision to endorse it.

"The project is good up to this day, I believe that it is," he said.

Mendoza said he was not surprised that local telecommunication firms were now keen on taking over the project after the ZTE contract was cancelled.

BI tightens up at Naia

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION SINCE June has blocked the departure of some 250 Filipino "tourists" for abroad on suspicion they would seek work overseas, under its intensified campaign to stamp out the notorious escort service racket at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said yesterday that of the 310 passengers who were off-loaded from their flights from June 15 to Sept. 30, 282 were Filipinos while the rest were foreigners.

Libanan said 250 of the Filipinos were deemed to be undocumented workers disguised as tourists.

Human trafficking victims

"Many of them did not have the required clearances from the POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration) and attempted to leave in violation of the government's ban on the departure of undocumented overseas Filipino workers," he said.

He said most of the Filipinos were bound for destinations like the Middle East, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Of the 28 off-loaded foreigners, Libanan said most of them were transit passengers who were being victimized by human trafficking syndicates. They were caught with spurious travel documents trying to head to various other foreign destinations.

Sad plight

Libanan said about 30 other Filipinos were also prevented from leaving for various reasons, including 18 persons who were on the bureau's hold-departure list and 10 government employees who did not have the required travel authority.

The immigration chief said the escort racket, allegedly run by unscrupulous personnel of various government agencies with offices at the Naia, had been blamed for the sad plight of many undocumented Filipinos wishing to work abroad.

For a fee, these government personnel escort undocumented would-be overseas workers through the maze of exit procedures at the Naia all the way to their aircraft, knowing full well they don't have papers and would likely end up at the mercy of employers abroad if they do make it out of the Philippines.

Correction

IN THE OCT. 10 issue, a story on Page A3—"Cops, again, say they'll go after cars with sirens"—misstated the expiration date of the commemorative plates issued by The Kiwanis Club of St. John. The plates are valid until Dec. 31, 2008—not April 10, 2008.

* * *

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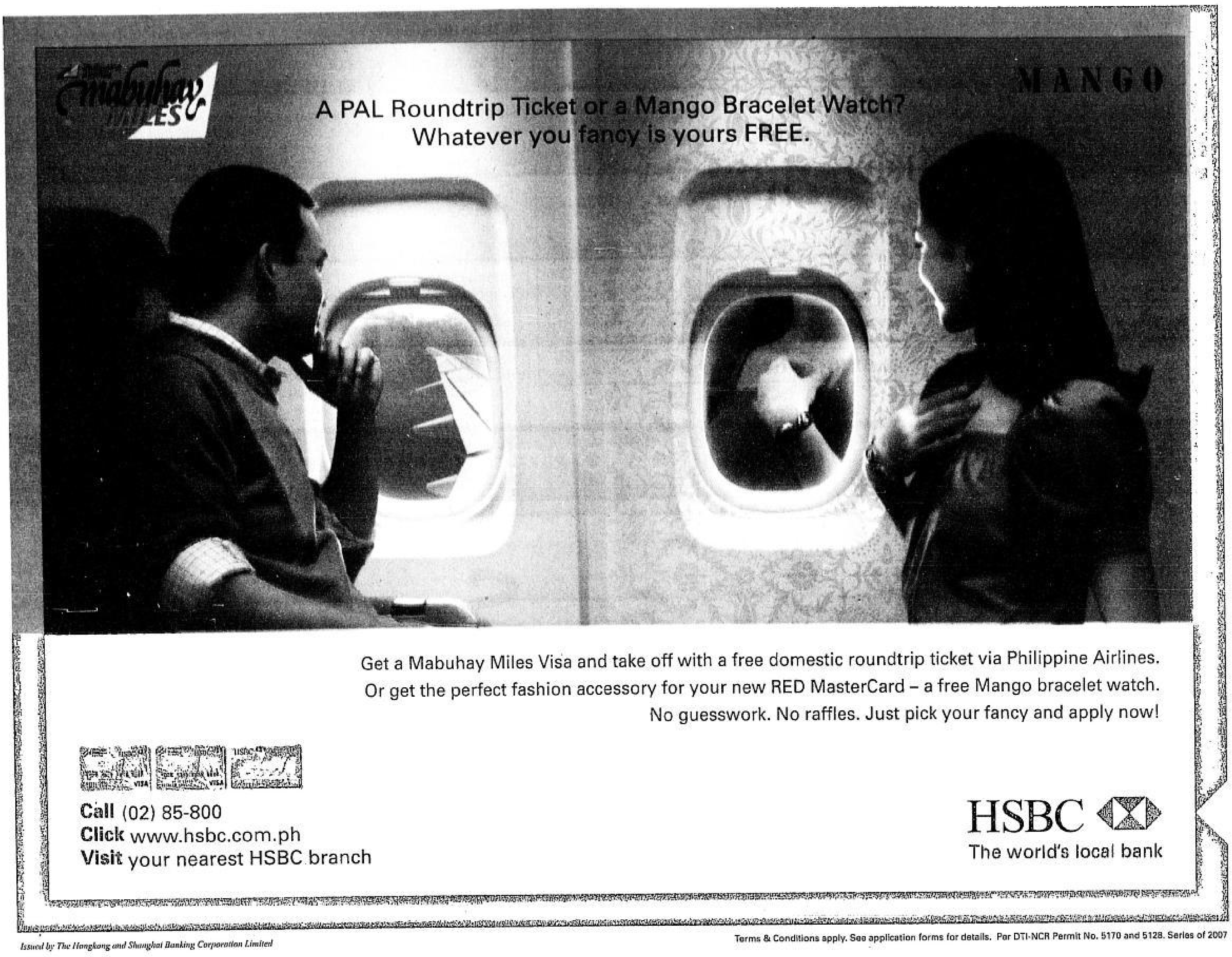

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Honors for Army officer

By Nikko Dizon

PHILIPPINE ARMY LT. COL. RENERIO Batalla, the United Nations peacekeeper who died of malaria last week in Sudan, will be given military honors today at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

His remains, scheduled to arrive last night at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport via Dubai, were to be brought to the Philippine Air Force headquarters chapel.

After the military honors, set for today at 7:30 a.m., Batalla's remains will be brought to the Libingan ng mga Bayani for a wake until his interment on Nov. 5.

Batalla was a member of the 13-man Philippine humanitarian delegation to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) tasked to oversee implementation of the 2005 cease-fire agreement between the Sudanese government and rebel groups.

He was scheduled to end his year-long tour of duty in December when he succumbed to the disease on Oct. 24, a day after his 41st birthday, Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres said.

Batalla, a member of Philippine Military Academy of Class 1990, is survived by his wife and four children. The youngest is an eight-month-old boy.

"It is always with a heavy heart [that we experience] the loss of a very promising officer while in the prime of his career," Army chief Lt. Col. Alexander Yano said. "He might have gone earlier than most of his peers but his reputation for serving his country with honor, for being a good provider for his family, and for sharing true friendship will be remembered forever."

Torres described Batalla as a "versatile" military officer who served in the intelligence, operations and personnel units of the Army.

Prior to his UN assignment, he was part of the Army Personnel Management Center.

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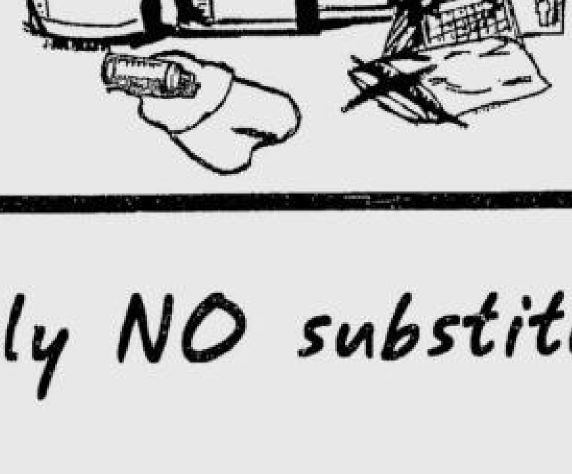

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CA orders Esperon et al. to explain officer's detention

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS directed Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and three other military officers to bring detained Marine Brigade Commander Col. Ariel Querubin before it on Nov. 8 and explain why the officer is still locked up.

The appellate court's Fifth Division issued a writ of habeas corpus in favor of Querubin after his wife, Ma. Flor Querubin, questioned the legality of her husband's detention. She pointed out that after all this time, Querubin, suspected of complicity in an alleged coup attempt last year, had not been formally charged.

Aside from Esperon, the other respondents were Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit, commanding general of the 2nd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army; Col. Arnulfo Marcos, commanding officer of the AFP Custodial and Detention Center in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, and Col. Ireneo Espino, camp commander, General Headquarters, at Camp Aguinaldo.

"Respondents are all ordered to appear before this Court on the said date and time to show cause why the said Col. Ariel O. Querubin is restrained of his liberty," the CA said in its Oct. 24 resolution.

Querubin, a Medal of Valor recipient, is among 28 officers detained at Camp Capinpin. In February last year, he led a Marine standoff in Fort Bonifacio allegedly over the unceremonious dismissal of their superior officer, Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, amid coup rumors.

Querubin's lawyer, Rodrigo Artuz, said Esperon had not signed the pre-trial advice on the charges to be filed against Querubin, which was supposed to be the basis for the court-martial proceeding against him.

"Without a valid referral, then there is no charge before the court-martial," Artuz said in a phone interview.

He said that because the court-martial was baseless, there was no reason to detain Querubin.

Querubin's lawyers also questioned the court-martial before the Supreme Court, asking the tribunal to stop the proceedings and to declare the creation of special general court-martial-2 against him and several other officers illegal.

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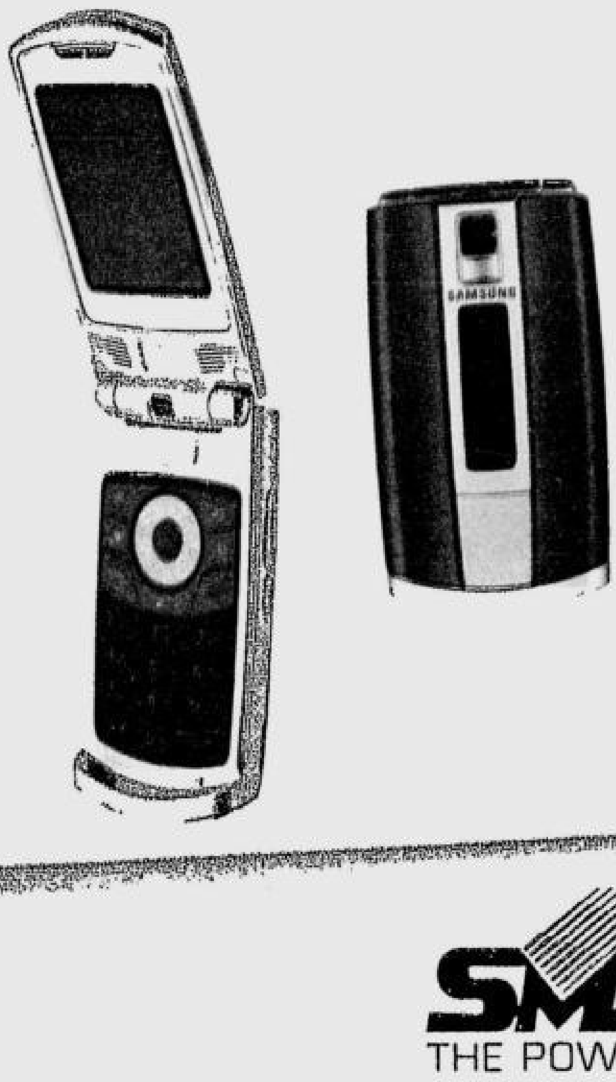

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51M expected to vote today

From page A1

the Communist Party of the Philippines and its legal front organizations had fielded sympathetic candidates in some areas.

In one region, the guerrillas were covertly backing 28 candidates, including 22 who were running for barangay captain, The Associated Press reported.

RODEL ROTONI

TEACHERS prepare voting paraphernalia for today's barangay elections at Commonwealth Elementary School in Quezon City.

Less violent than 2002

The PNP said 20 people had been killed and 13 others injured in election-related incidents in its monthlong monitoring of the peace and order situation prior to today's balloting.

"So far, the figures are much lower than the incidents recorded in the 2002 barangay elections," Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, PNP spokesperson, told the INQUIRER.

Pagdilao said 159 incidents were reported for the entire election period in 2002. As of Saturday, only 25 cases were listed, he said.

The 20 fatalities included incumbent barangay officials, candidates and civilians.

PNP information officer Roy Navales said 318 people had been apprehended for violating the gun ban, while 277 firearms had been confiscated.

The Comelec expected no major hitches in its preparations for today's voting.

Liquor ban

Its spokesperson, James Jimenez, said the poll body was mostly dealing with reports of people—perhaps too happy over the long weekend they were enjoying—having one drink too many.

The liquor ban took effect yesterday and would last until midnight tonight.

Violators of the ban could face jail time of not less than one year but not more than six years without probation.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is casting her vote in her hometown of Lubao, Pampanga, before flying to Dumaguete City to attend the opening of the Integrated Taxation System International Conference.

When voters troop to the precincts today, many will likely have on their minds which candidates could solve the gut problems facing their communities, from petty neighborhood quarrels and uncollected garbage to busted streetlights and the lack of health services.

Many candidates are running for the honor, power and privilege attached to the position.

What makes them run

The monthly allowance of a barangay captain may range from a low of P3,500 to a high of P20,000, depending on the internal revenue allotment (IRA) and income of the village.

In some areas, each barangay council member receives a monthly honorarium of P11,500 while the barangay chair gets P15,000 monthly.

A town official said most candidates were running because of the honorariums they could get as well as for the scholarships granted to their children.

An SK chair, who also sits as a member of the barangay council, gets at least P1,300 monthly.

For farmers, who constitute most of the elective barangay officials in the provinces, P3,500 is already a "bonanza" because they earn only when they harvest their crops, officials said.

Family affair

In Bulacan, Maria Gilamie Sarmiento, 21, said the P1,870 monthly honorarium she received as Maysantol SK chair in Bulacan town helped pay for her education.

She said scholarship assistance is also given to family members of village officials.

In Catanduanes, an entire family is running for barangay posts in separate villages.

Mark Ian Condeno is aiming for the SK chairmanship in Marambong while his mother, Mary Ching, is running for a seat in the barangay council.

Isai, the father, a former kagawad, is running for a similar seat in Napo several kilometers away in the poblacion, where the family resides, according to the young Condeno's rival, Michelle Trinidad.

Several third-term barangay captains have fielded their wives or close relatives to run for the posts they will soon vacate while they themselves are campaigning for a council seat.

What's in a name?

Edu Manzano is running for kagawad of Calzada in Guinobatan, Albay. Of course, he is not the television game host who also confiscates pirated compact discs as chair of the Optical Media Board.

In Zone 2 in Digos City, Joseph Anthony Estrada made sure voters would not forget to write down his name for village councilor. During his campaign, he introduced himself to people as "Erap Estrada."

A former *tanod*, Estrada said he was not capitalizing on the name of the former President but merely showing how he admired him. "My parents also love him very much. It's the reason they named me after him," he said.

One bet, three posts

In Los Baños, Laguna, a reelectionist candidate for kagawad in Bagong Kalsada is named Boy Capitan.

Another candidate running for barangay captain in one of the villages of Nagcarlan is named Punong Lungsod.

In Negros Occidental, Comelec computers discovered that a 59-year-old teacher was running for three positions in different barangays.

Election supervisor Jessie Suarez said the name of Fe Benitez appeared in Comelec computer records as a candidate for councilwoman in Barangay 4 in Bacolod City and Zone 4 in Pulupandan town.

Her name also appeared as a candidate for barangay captain in Tabao Proper, Valladolid town.

The Comelec removed the name of Benitez as a barangay council candidate in Bacolod and Pulupandan after she chose to run as barangay captain for Tabao Proper.

Sure of victory

In Cotabato City, candidates for village chair and village council in Rosary 11 have started serving the public even if they have not been elected.

Led by reelectionist chair Rasul Ismael, some candidates were seen cleaning drainage and cutting grasses every morning while doing house-to-house campaign in the early evening.

"This is our way of showing we can be good servants. We have to clean our surroundings because this is our place and all of us will benefit from this simple service," Rasul said.

Vote-buying, herding

Vote-buying and "herding" of young voters to ensure victory were reported in some areas in Bicol and the Visayas.

In Tacloban City, some candidates for barangay chair were reportedly buying votes for up to P500 per voter, prompting Mayor Alfred Romualdez to issue an appeal to both candidates and voters to keep the elections clean.

In Catanduanes, some SK chair candidates have distributed P400 as initial payment for votes, with the balance to be paid on the eve or on the day of election, according to a local government official.

The competition to win seats in the barangay council has emboldened a candidate for SK chair to convince 25 of the 35 young voters in Asuncion in Viga town to go with him to the capital town of Virac, 50 km away, where they are now being "kept" in a safe house until Election Day.

This practice of "keeping," which is applicable in elections where there are a limited number of voters, has persisted in Catanduanes ever since politicians forced councilors and SK municipal federation chairs, who will vote for their provincial federation presidents, to join them on trips outside the province.

They went as far as Boracay and Baguio City, where they were entertained until their return to the province to vote.

In Parang, Shariff Kabunsuan, a former town official said some politicians were paying voters who agreed to have their names removed from the voters' lists.

One of the areas of security concern being closely watched by the PNP is Mindanao.

In Pigcawayan, North Cotabato, a peace covenant was signed on Friday between warring members of the Alamada clan, who recently figured in a shootout.

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, police and government soldiers have been sent to villages of Lanao del Sur, Shariff Kabunsuan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao and Basilan, where at least 1,072 villages have been identified as "hot spots."

Eid Kabalu, spokesperson of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said the group's central committee had ordered all its forces to stay neutral and allow voting in their areas. *With reports from Tonette Orejas, Anselmo Roque and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon; Melvin Gascon, Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes and Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Fernan Gianan, Romulo Ponte, Marlon Ramos, Niña Catherine Calleja, Niño Jesus Orbeta, Delfin Mallari Jr., Madonna Virola and Redempto Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Alex Pal, Jhunnex Napallacan, Carla Gomez, Kit Bagaipo, Jani Arnaiz, Felipe Celino, Joey Gabieta and Vicente Labro, Inquirer Visayas; Jeoffrey Maitem, Orlando Dinoy, Charlie Señase, Grace Albasin, Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Richel Umel, Rizalene Acac, Eldie Aguirre, Edwin Fernandez, Ryan Rosauro, Nash Maulana and Alvin Añonuevo, Inquirer Mindanao*

TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

AETA elder Jungle Serrano of Porac, Pampanga, wants his people to choose leaders who are wise, not those who have patrons among politicians in the lowlands.

In modern way of voting, Aeta rely on 'assistors'

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

MABALACAT, PAMPANGA—The Aeta have long stopped selecting their leaders by putting stones, corn kernels or bamboo sticks before their favored candidates.

Today, when they go to the polls, the non-readers and non-writers among them will be relying—as they had in past elections—on another way of picking their rulers.

The new Aeta way is actually nothing more than reliance on so-called "assistors," or Aeta who can read, write and count, according to four Aeta candidates for barangay captain and two elders.

Assistors have not been lacking of late, said Ruben Sison, who is gunning for his third and last term as chair of the upland village of Calumpang here.

The construction of an elementary school in the village in 1997, six years after Mount Pinatubo's eruptions, has helped.

"Many members of the tribe are now able to read and write," Sison, 53, said.

Pact to prevent cheating

They are expected to assist the voters among their parents and other relatives, he said. Of the more than 800 voters in Calumpang, at least 350 are Aeta.

To prevent rigging of choices, Sison and his lone opponent, Jimmy Jimenez, have made a pact whereby assistors would each help only three voters.

"An assistor should not write his or his choices. What should be written are the names of the candidates that the voter chooses," Sison said.

Sison, who finished only Grade 2, said his being literate would help him from being "fooled."

"I learned to write and read and even speak English when I worked as a jungle survival instructor for the [US] Air Force in the mountains of Mt. Pinatubo," he said.

Importance of trust

Salong Sunggod, director of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in Central Luzon, said the assistor system has been allowed by the Commission on Elections.

Sison and Roman King, a candidate for barangay chair in Inararo in Porac town, said that trust—a value many Aeta hold dear—had helped prevent cheating.

Assistors are usually relatives of voters, they said.

"You can't violate the trust of your relatives," said King, who is running against his sister, Mary Bulatao, the incumbent village chief.

What's at stake in barangay polls

From page A1

- Free medical care in any government hospital or institution (includes surgical expenses, X-rays, laboratory fees, etc.).
- Medical coverage of up to P5,000 in private institutions (chargeable to barangay funds).
- Exemption from payment of tuition and matriculation fees in state colleges or universities located in the province or city to which the barangay belongs. This benefit is extended to the official's legitimate dependent children and to SK members.
- Preference in appointments to positions in government and in government-owned and -controlled corporations, subject to qualifications.

The *punong barangay* is also allowed to carry a firearm within his/her jurisdiction in performance of peace and order functions.

Officials of more affluent barangays, like Ayala Alabang in Muntinlupa City and St. Ignatius in Quezon City, receive honorariums ranging from P8,000 to P15,000 a month.

"I receive P7,900," said St. Ignatius head Charmina Banal. "My kagawads and SK chair receive around P6,000 each."

Barangay Captain Roland Pineda of Ayala Alabang said he was receiving "more or less P15,000." His council members get between P12,000 and P15,000 each.

P46 billion in funds

The Local Government Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7160) defines the barangay as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies and programs. It also serves as a forum where people may express their opinions and where disputes may be settled amicably.

Barangays receive 20 percent of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) allocated to local government units (LGUs).

In turn, the barangay must allocate its IRA as mandated by law: honoraria for officials (55 percent), Barangay Development Fund (20 percent), Sangguniang Kabataan (10 percent), Calamity Fund (5 percent), Reserve Fund (5 percent), and Discretionary Fund (5 percent).

In the proposed 2008 budget, LGUs were allocated P228 billion, which gives all 41,994 barangays nationwide a total fund of P46 billion. Ten percent of this amount—or around P5 billion—goes to the Sangguniang Kabataan.

Other sources of money

Barangays raise additional revenue from other sources, such as fund-raising activities. Barangays can also apply for funding from provincial, city or municipal development funds.

The *punong barangay* is the chief executive who enforces laws, signs contracts upon authorization of the Sangguniang Barangay, maintains public order and approves vouchers relating to disbursement of funds.

The *punong barangay* also has the power to call and preside over the sessions of the Sangguniang Barangay and the barangay assembly, organize and lead operations during emergencies or calamities, prepare the annual executive and supplemental budgets of the barangay, administer the operation of the Katarungang Pambarangay, and conduct an annual *palarong barangay*.

The Sangguniang Barangay (which includes the SK chair as member) is the legislative body. It enacts ordinances and annual and supplemental budgets.

Term limits

It also provides for the construction and maintenance of barangay facilities and other public works projects, regulates the use of facilities constructed with government funds within the jurisdiction of the barangay, holds fund-raising activities for barangay projects, prescribes fines in amounts not exceeding P1,000 for violation of barangay ordinances, and initiates the establishment of a barangay high school, whenever feasible.

The Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881) sets the term of the *punong barangay* and the seven regular Sangguniang Barangay members at six years. This was reduced to three years by the Synchronized Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections Act of 2002 (RA 9164).

The election code states that barangay elections should be nonpartisan events: "No person who files a certificate of candidacy shall represent or allow himself to be represented as a candidate of any political party or any other organization."

Despite this, some politicians are known to give financial support to aspiring barangay officials, hoping that come election time, the latter would help deliver votes for them.

Young ones

Young Filipinos have also been involved in local politics through the Sangguniang Kabataan.

Every barangay has a Sangguniang Kabataan composed of eight elected officials—one chair and seven members—who are tasked to "promulgate resolutions necessary to carry out the objectives of the youth in the barangay."

The Local Government Code states that SK candidates should be at least 15 but not more than 21 years old at the time of election. In 2002, RA 9164 amended the age qualifications saying candidates should be at least 15 years old and less than 18 years of age.

Registered constituents belonging to the same age range elect SK officials to three-year terms. Terms have been extended due to the postponement of SK elections.

Some sectors have called for the abolition of the Sangguniang Kabataan, saying it is being used by young members of political clans as launching pads for their political careers.

Training ground

Others lament that the SK budget (10 percent of the barangay's general fund) is spent only on basketball tournaments and beauty pageants.

A former congressman claimed the SK is "a training ground not for efficient government leaders but for corrupt politicians."

But some SK projects have proved to be worthy allocations of barangay funds. They included free treatment and rehabilitation for disabled indigent patients, feeding programs, scholarships, skills training, coastal cleanups, homes for street children and medical missions

DA lists areas where bird flu may enter RP

By Amy R. Remo

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arthur C. Yap has appealed to local government units and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) to keep a tight watch on migratory birds during the months of October to December.

To keep the Philippines one of the only three countries in Southeast Asia still free of the dreaded avian influenza, Yap also urged the public to help protect the P150-billion poultry sector, which employs over 150,000 Filipinos.

Bird flu, or avian influenza, is an infectious disease caused by the H5N1 virus.

All birds are believed to be susceptible to the virus, although some species are reported to be more resistant to infection than others. Some forms of bird flu may be transferred to humans.

According to Yap, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has intensified its information campaign in 20 areas at risk of bird flu infection as well as around the country's coastline and areas with high concentrations of ducks.

The migratory birds are expected from Indonesia, Taiwan and China.

The critical areas are Lake Mainit in Agusan del Norte; Agusan del Sur; Aparri, Cagayan; Olango Island, Cebu;

Ligwasan Marsh, Kabacan, Cotabato; General Santos City;

Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte; Magat Dam, Isabela; Naujan Lake, Mindoro; Himamaylan, Negros Occidental; Quezon, Palawan;

Candaba swamp, Pampanga; Roxas and Capiz on Panay Island; Sibugay province; Surigao del Norte; Bulan and Matnog, Sorsogon; Surigao del Sur; Zamboanga City; Zamboanga del Norte, and Zamboanga del Sur.

Duck farmers have been advised not to graze their flocks near the critical areas to avoid contact with migratory birds.

The DA has also set up task forces at the municipal level to deal with any outbreak.

"If anyone spots a sickly-looking bird in their area, they should immediately report it to the nearest BAI office," Yap said.

Avian influenza diagnostic laboratories were set up early this year to pinpoint outbreaks and carry out the appropriate measures.

The BAI is also conducting table-top exercises as well as preparedness and response planning workshops.

A BAI team of veterinarians is carrying out a nationwide educational campaign for poultry and livestock growers on the threat and perils of bird flu.

In the event of a suspected outbreak, local task forces have organized rapid action teams that could be deployed within 24 hours.

As of July 11, the World Health Organization reported that 192 of 318 people infected with the AI virus have died since a strain resurfaced in Southeast Asia in 2003.

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1st Reading: Rom 8:12-17
Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath and a crippled woman was there. An evil spirit had kept her bent for 18 years so that she could not straighten up at all. On seeing her, Jesus called her and said, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her and immediately she was made straight and praised God.

But the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had performed this healing on the Sabbath day and he said to the people, "There are six days in which to work; come on those days to be healed and not on the Sabbath."

But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Everyone of you unties his ox or his donkey on the Sabbath and leads it out of the barn to give it water. And here you have a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound for 18 years. Should she not be freed from her bonds on the Sabbath?"

When Jesus said this, all his opponents felt ashamed. But the people rejoiced at the many wonders that happened through him.

Commentary

We must live in the Spirit of God as the sons and daughters of God. We are the adopted children of God in Jesus, with Jesus as our brother. We call God 'Abba,' Father, and have the same relationship to God as Jesus. This is the gift of the kingdom of God, the good news that Jesus brings to earth in his body. We must live in our bodies as Jesus lives in his—to the glory of God—for we are heirs with Jesus, in suffering and in glory.

A woman who for 18 years has been bent over is seen by God. He goes to her, touches her, and raises her up, and in gratitude, she blesses God. The synagogue and those in attendance are horrified. In setting her free from her bondage, Jesus has broken the Sabbath laws and their customs. They cannot rejoice with her or with Jesus. Then Jesus tells them Sabbath worship consists in this—setting others free—and not in following empty laws that make us feel like we are righteous. This is what our God looks for in us.

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The Creative Life TCL

Unrequited love inspires cadet to win

From page A1

quited love, earning for himself the top prize for impromptu speech at the 9th Philippine National Debate Championships, which the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) hosted here.

Ateneo de Manila University won the weeklong tournament that ended on Saturday, besting 37 other colleges and universities, including the University of the Philippines and a Malaysian college, according to Maj. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent.

But it was Absalon who drew the most attention as the tournament wound up on Saturday.

Absalon was asked to describe his "most inconvenient truth."

Surprise topic

The question was inspired by the documentary on global warming which this year earned for former US Vice President Al Gore Oscars for best documentary and best song and the Nobel Peace Prize which he shared with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Absalon surprised the audience seated at the grandstand of Borromeo Field when he delivered a heartfelt tale about his "crush," a fellow contestant from another university.

"Absalon described what he felt for this girl when the debates started, and he reflected on the many ways he could introduce himself to the girl," said Capt. Dennis Solomon, PMA public information officer.

She had boyfriend

"Finally, he mustered enough courage to ask the girl to the hop. His most inconvenient truth turned out to be the girl's romantic feelings. She told him she had a boyfriend," Solomon said.

The final debate matches were scheduled on recognition day for PMA Laon Alab (Lakas Tipon Alay sa Bayan) Class of 2011.

Debate participants seated themselves beside the cadets' parents to watch the proceedings, but some of them spent the time practicing their speeches.

'Rido' worsens conflict in South, according to study

From page A1

the documented clan violence occurred between 2000 and 2004. During this period, the ceasefire between the government and the Islamic front was broken many times by clan fighting. New York Times News Service

Body of US soldier recovered in Sulu

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE BODY of an American soldier, who had helped train Filipino troops battling al-Qaida-linked militants in Sulu, was recovered on Saturday, a day after he went swimming at a beach in Panamao town, reports reaching the Sulu police said.

But Senior Supt. Ahirum Ajirim, Sulu provincial director, said the information reaching his office was limited and he could provide no other details.

In Manila, US Embassy spokesperson Rebecca Thompson said the American died on Friday, but declined to identify the serviceman and his unit or provide details of his death pending notification of next of kin.

US military officials were investigating his death, Thompson said.

A Philippine police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said the American went missing while swimming with fellow soldiers in a lake in Panamao.

US Navy Lt. Commander Fred Kuebler confirmed the death of the US serviceman.

But in a text message to the INQUIRER, Kuebler did not give specific details about the incident and said the victim died in a "noncombat-related incident."

Kuebler also declined to name the dead serviceman as a "matter of policy."

"The name will not be released until 24 hours after the next of kin have been notified," he said.

American military instructors, intelligence personnel and engineers have been providing combat training, weapons and intelligence help to local troops in the country's restive South since 2002. They have also participated in rural civic projects, including medical missions and road and school repairs.

They are barred by the Philippine Constitution from engaging in local combat. Their noncombat assistance has nevertheless been credited with helping the underfunded Philippine military inflict setbacks on the Abu Sayyaf, a radical group blamed for high-profile kidnappings, beheadings and bomb attacks.

In February, US Marine Cpl. Timothy Lewis died of a heart attack shortly after arriving on Jolo from his unit's base in Okinawa in southern Japan to take part in counterterrorism exercises.

Ten American soldiers also died in February 2002 when their MHE-47 Chinook helicopter crashed at sea north of this city after ferrying US Special Forces to nearby Basilan for counterterrorism maneuvers. US officials said it was unlikely hostile fire was involved. *Reports from Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao, and AP*

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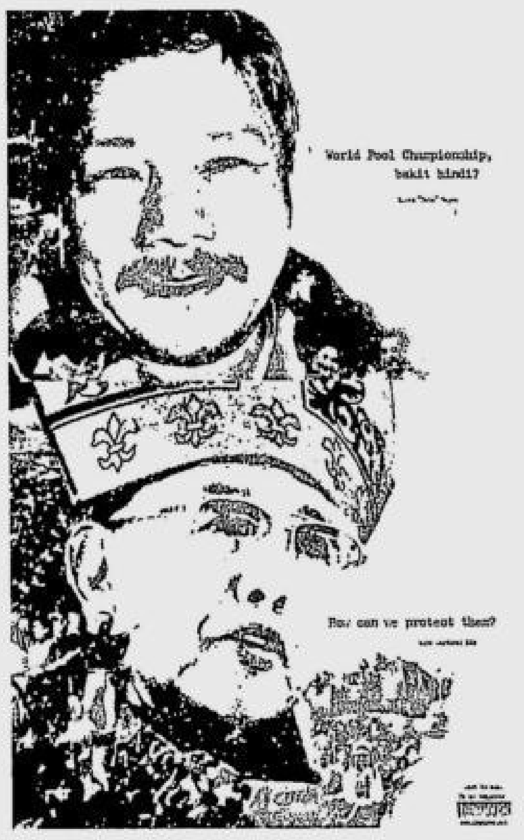
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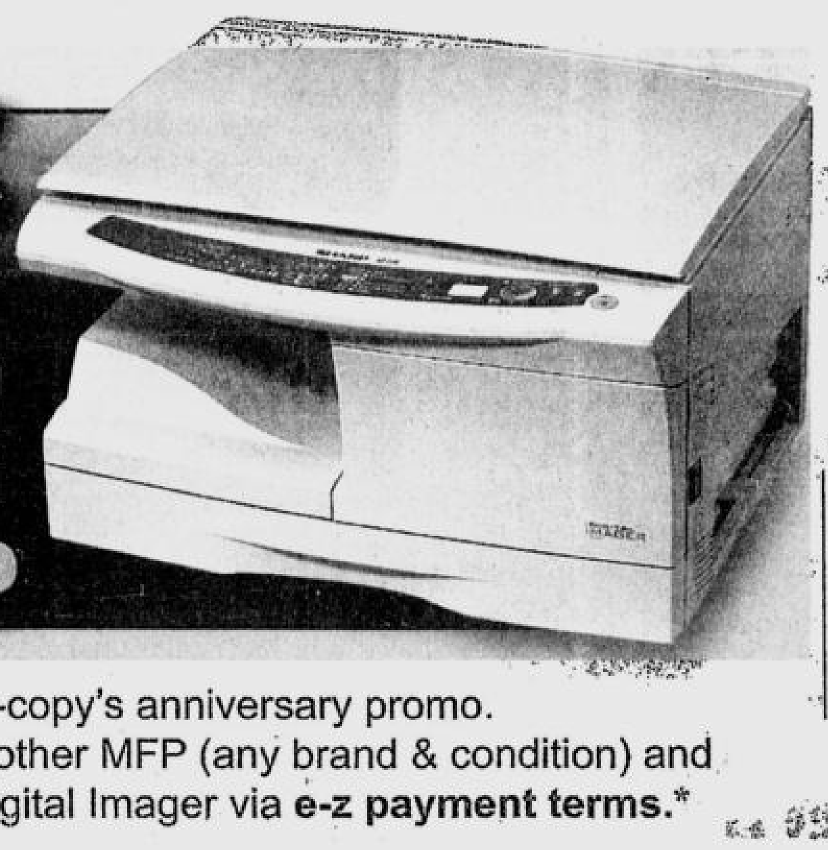

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Environmental concerns drive beauties

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PILI, CAMARINES Sur—Five beauty queens from four continents vying for the Miss Earth crown find higher cause in joining a pageant to raise people's awareness of the environment, the degradation of which they are witness to in their own countries.

Zhazira Nurkhodjaera is from a city called Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan in Central Asia where the average life span is 50 years.

Describing the place as far and isolated, Nurkhodjaera said the Russians conducted underground nuclear bomb tests there until 1991 when the Soviet Union crumbled.

"I have seen many babies with abnormalities, with no hands and feet," she said.

Nuclear test

Nurkhodjaera, who cannot speak the Kazakh language but Russian and English, joined the pageant to get the message out about what happened to her people and their environment.

"Nuclear testing must be stopped," she said.

Beyond the beauty pageant, Àine (pronounced En-ya) Gormley said she would continue her study on water pollution, the first part of which she has published.

Gormley has a degree in environmental science and is in her final year of doctoral studies on water pollution at the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland.

She said where she's from fresh water sources are in grave risk of toxic contamination because the algae is dwindling.

Desertification

In Africa, Millicent Olyn concerns herself with awareness campaigns on the causes and prevention of desertification.

She said she appears in talk shows and before school kids to tell them about the indiscriminate cutting of trees and bad practices that hasten desertification.

"Our country is big with only 1.8 million inhabitants but 58 percent of it is the Kalahari Desert while 38 percent is classified reserve and only 12 percent built-up areas and agricultural farms," she said.

Olyn lives in Iwaneng Town in Botswana where she promotes proper garbage disposal because communities there have to be taught proper sanitation.

Norwegian Margaret Paulin Hauge fears a future without snow in winter if the depletion of the ozone layer is not stopped.

Hauge, whose mother is from Davao City, said they missed the snow in Norway last winter because of the warm temperatures; it rained instead.

"Our country has been known for its four seasons and winter is very important to us. People come to our place to enjoy the winter holiday," she said.

Veronica Ochoa is from Ciudad (city) Cuenca in Ecuador which, she said, is very clean and where one can drink the water, but the issue of "calentamiento global" or global warming has moved her.

"One can actually do simple things like turning off lights and the refrigerator when not in use, dispose of garbage properly and recycle," she said, adding that she shares this information with students in Cuenca.

The young women were at the Camsur Watersports Complex here over the weekend to shoot the swimsuit competition of the pageant produced by Carousel Productions Inc.

Peachy O. Veneracion, Carousel vice president and project director, said the pageant is a totally Filipino production that now has candidates from 85 countries, up from 43 when it started seven years ago. The finals is on Nov. 11 at the UP Theater, Diliman, Quezon City

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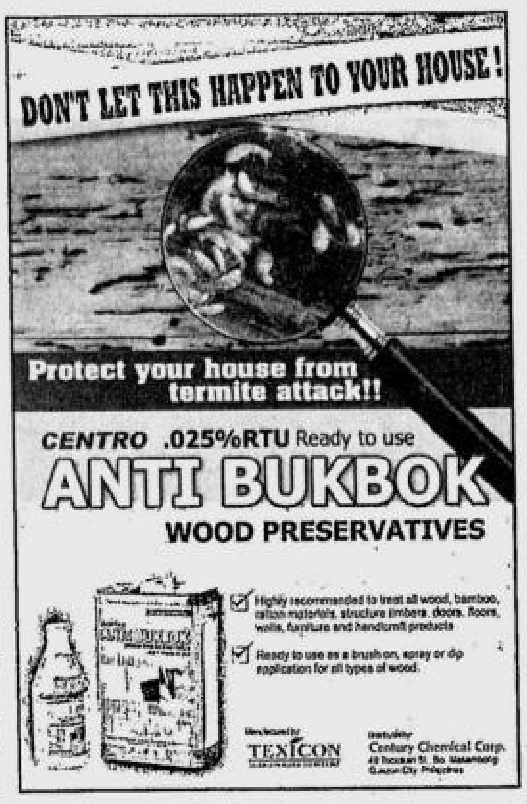
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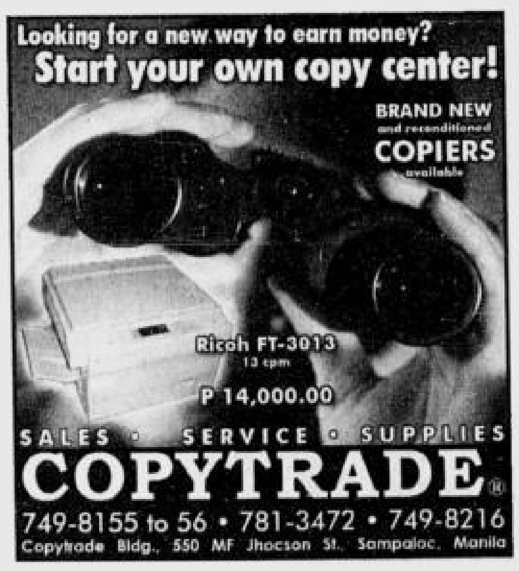
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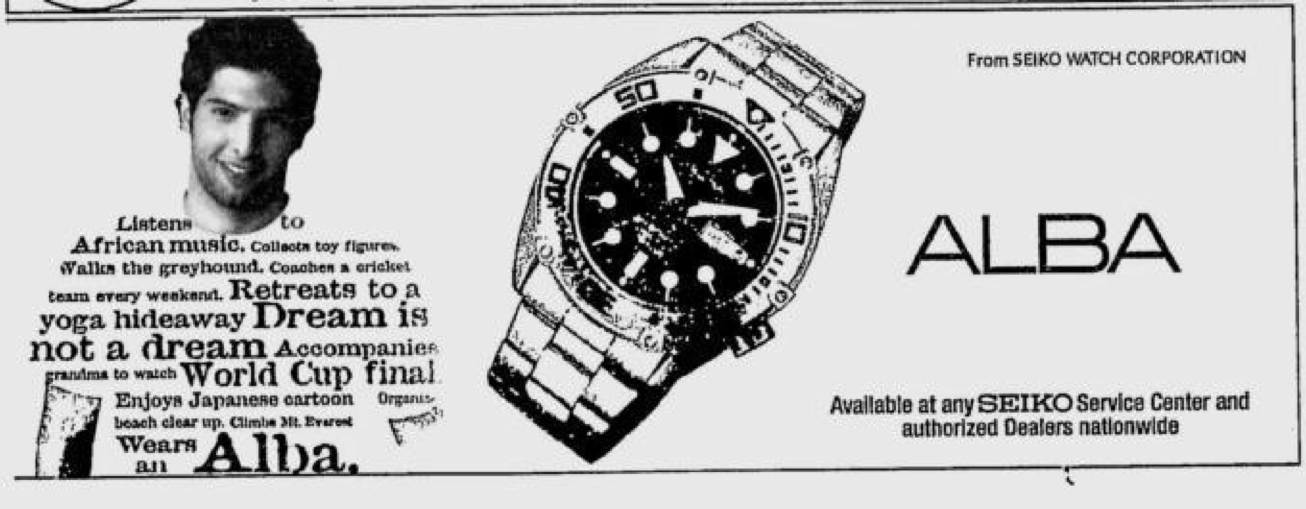
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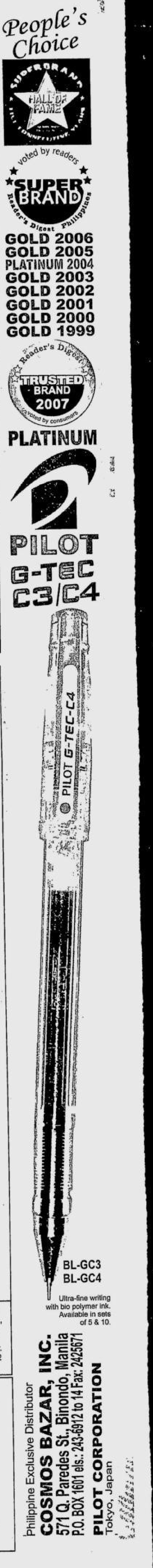
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OPINION

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Political suicide

EDITORIAL

IN THE LAST THREE DAYS, THE INQUIRER HAS sought to put last week's pardon of convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada in perspective, to explain why—even though we, like many others, saw it coming—it still came as an enormous outrage, a terrible disservice to the country and a travesty of justice.

On Friday, we criticized his lawyers' appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo, taking them to task for the intellectual dishonesty and rank condescension of their letter. On Saturday, we struggled with each of the three reasons the President gave for granting her predecessor executive clemency, and found them sorely wanting, trivial even. And yesterday we picked up a theme raised earlier and condemned this obscene pairing of political bedfellows; now, to repeat a phrase making the rounds, it is the People of the Philippines vs Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

One more thing needs to be said, one more attempt at perspective-setting needs to be made: On the strictly tactical level, will the President's craven bid to ensure her continuing political survival work?

On the strictly tactical level, the pardon doesn't exactly make sense. At best, it is an unnecessary risk-taking, with make-or-break consequences; at worst, it dooms the political rehabilitation, not of a disgraced former president, but an unpopular incumbent.

The notion (proposed last week by a veteran political analyst, and seconded by a few others) that Estrada could run again, and that his pardon was in exchange for protecting Ms Arroyo should he win again, is not only an absurd fantasy; it is also a legal impossibility. The Constitution bars him from running for Malacañang, the seat of government he abandoned on Jan. 20, 2001, ever again; if he files, he will be disqualified by the Commission on Elections, whoever the new commissioners will be. If he is not disqualified, a suit before the Supreme Court will settle the matter with alacrity. On this point the Constitution is unambiguous; even politicians will understand it.

To be sure, this notion conflicts with the third reason the President gave for granting Estrada executive clemency, but the conflict is of no moment. Estrada can legally run for political office other than the presidency; the only thing holding him back would be that promise not to run again and, as he told an adoring crowd gathered in the City of San Juan, engage in "dirty politics." But Ms Arroyo herself infamously made a similar commitment, and on Rizal Day yet. What makes her think Estrada will honor his own promise?

The idea that the pardon will usher in a new era of reconciliation, and that Estrada's supporters will eventually warm to Ms Arroyo, underestimates the depth of the political divide. The same adoring crowd in San Juan and the third of the electorate that conventional wisdom thinks they represent may have applauded her for releasing Estrada, but it is a stretch to imagine that they will forget, not only the former actor's six years in jail, but the election fraud she allegedly perpetrated against another actor-politician and populist icon, the late Fernando Poe Jr.

Not least, the argument that the deep dismay of the Edsa II forces caused by the pardon could be easily contained, its effect on protest campaigns or election turnout safely managed, is fatally flawed. The real power of the middle forces lies, not in the ability to elect a president, but in its capacity to unseat one. Turbulent as the President's first six years in office have been, the Estrada pardon will only make her last three years even more tumultuous. She may ride it out to the end of her term, but she will find that her act of executive clemency has limited rather than widened her options for choosing the terms of her exit.

Like many others in society interested in making the country's democratic project succeed, we have never ruled out the possibility of pardon per se. Like many others, we have always believed that support for any grant of clemency was conditional: It was a question of the timing being right, and nonnegotiable conditions (such as admission and repentance) being met. President Arroyo, however, granted Estrada pardon to meet personal and political ends. That she won't meet them is ironic; that she politicized the administration of justice is, alas for all of us, tragic.

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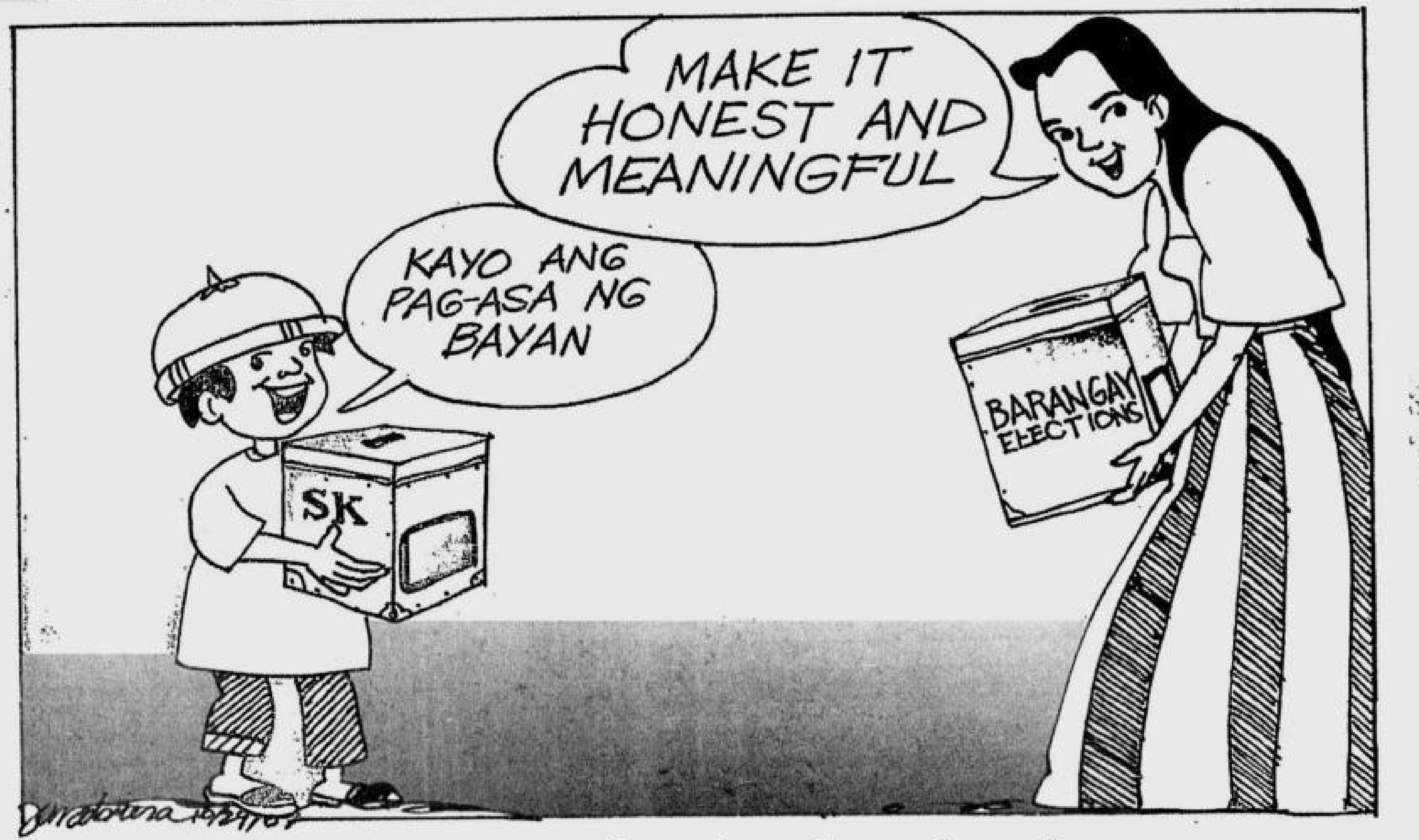
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Don't vote for the drunkards

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHEN YOU GO TO THE POLLING PRECINCTS today to vote for your barangay officials, don't vote for the drunkards, the "istambays," the jobless, the good-for-nothings just because they were the ones who had the time to participate in your drinking sessions. Vote for the more responsible and educated candidates.

Candidates who attend drinking sessions night after night to campaign for votes will continue to do the same if they are elected. You, the voters, will have to subsidize their drinking habits. When a person is jobless or a mere "istambay," that's a sure indication that he is either lazy or can't find or keep a job. He will use the barangay funds to support his family. Many shiftless good-for-nothings have found positions in the barangay as an easy source of livelihood, for they don't look for jobs anymore. They just spend their days drinking and courting votes for the next election. They are the ones who will commit abuses once they are elected.

Many barangay officials have started acting like congressmen—which is the worst that any person can be compared to. They have begun to pass tax ordinances to bilk their constituents, many of whom are poor. They cannot pull their shenanigans in the enlightened villages so they victimize the poor in the squatter colonies who do not know any better—the very people who need the help, not the exploitation, of their barangays.

There are barangay courts that exact 10 percent of all monetary transactions in cases that pass through them. Let us say a squatter seeks the help of the barangay to collect a long unpaid debt. Even if the debtor is willing to pay directly to the person to whom he owes money, the barangay court will insist that he pay through it so that it can deduct 10 percent. Isn't this illegal? That is why many poor people don't go to barangay courts to settle differences but take the law into their own hands.

Other barangay officials abuse their constituents, the people they are supposed to help. Others collect *tong* from squatters, jeepney and tricycle drivers. Instead of enforcing the laws, they are the first to violate them. Do you remember that barangay captain in Manila who built his house in the middle of the street? It took a Dirty Harry, Mayor Alfredo Lim, to get him out of there.

What I am driving at is this: Vote wisely today. Just because a person is a lively drinking buddy doesn't mean he would make a good barangay official.

* * *

Speaker Jose de Venecia has called for a "moral revolution" to "end corruption in our society." Look who's talking!

The most corrupt agency in the Philippines is the House of Representatives. Billions of pesos of the people's money are wasted here, most of it going into private pockets. The usual whipping boys are the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue but no, the House, whose members are routinely addressed as "your honor" and "honorable," is worse when it comes to corruption, beginning with the pork barrel. And that is because the Speaker tolerates and abets it. The most popular speakers are those who were fast in signing vouchers and checks. How do you think JDV cobbles his Rainbow Coalition that keeps him as its Speaker year after year? In the recent cash distribution in Malacañang, who were the recipients?

What we need is not only a "moral revolution" but a real revolution where many of our top officials will be lined up against the wall.

* * *

It is said among businessmen and entrepreneurs that it is very hard to do business in the Philippines because of corruption. Even if you want to do business honestly, the bureaucracy won't let you. It will give you the runaround and very long red tape unless you grease some palms. Desk drawers in many offices are always open—so you can easily drop your peso bills there.

Ironically, it is the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), an agency associated with gambling and its unsavory connotations, that is showing the way to transparency and fair play. It is also showing the way in pursuing its ambitious project to establish a multi-billion-peso massive tourism and entertainment complex. To be known as "Bagong Nayong Pilipino Manila Bay Integrated City," the development will rise on 40 hectares of prime reclaimed land between Roxas Boulevard and Manila Bay. There will be theme parks, amusement rides, hotels and restaurants, theaters, etc. For Pagcor is not only gambling. Much of it is amusement and entertainment.

Envisioned by Pagcor Chair Ephraim Genuino, the project will showcase a diverse range of world-class leisure and amusement facilities while offering a taste of the tropical charm of our country and the warm hospitality of our people.

At no cost to the government, the project is expected to bring in at least $15 billion in foreign and local investments, create more than 250,000 jobs for the local workforce and generate millions of direct tourist receipts and additional government revenues.

Realizing the value of transparency and fair play in upholding the integrity of public projects of this magnitude, Pagcor has made public through its website the terms of reference (TOR) for the guidance of prospective investors.

Also, to clarify any questions on the TOR, Pagcor held an Investors' Conference for would-be locators, who have now started submitting their applications for licenses to participate in this development. The investors have been assured that they would be informed immediately whether or not their applications have been accepted and, in case of disapproval, the reason behind the decision.

Pardonee and pardoner

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

NOPE (NO PARDON FOR ESTRADA) SAYS IT'S "the saddest moment in history as far as justice is concerned." "This is a very bad precedent, considering that we're supposed to be teaching our politicians not to be corrupt and to exercise good governance," says Dante Ang, a NOPE convenor.

Fidel Ramos says GMA made a mistake to pardon Erap because Erap was still capable of doing to her what she did to him. Erap's influence may have dwindled, he says, but it hasn't completely dissipated. He remains a threat to her. In any case, he says, Erap himself has not admitted his crimes and publicly apologized to the nation to deserve a pardon. The two former Korean presidents—Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo—did so before they were pardoned by their successor. That is a prerequisite. "A lawyer cannot atone for the guilt of his client. (Erap himself must do so.)"

Well, yes and no to both. As far as NOPE is concerned, nope, the Erap pardon isn't the saddest day in Philippine justice, a lot more is infinitely sadder. Not the least Edita Burgos pursuing a lonely and increasingly solitary quest for justice while the (non-)President feels free to tell the UN with a straight face she does not abide human rights violations in her country.

Indeed, even sadder than Erap's pardon is NOPE's own myopic quest to deny Erap—and only Erap—pardon. If I recall right, during martial law, the name of one of the organizations that fought it was "Justice for Ninoy, Justice for All." NOPE should have said yup to that, history being the thing they claim to have as their backdrop. The better project would have been: No Pardon for Erap, No Pardon for Everyone. The acronym might have sounded a little wretched, "NOPE-NOPE," but the concept would not. The point is simple: Justice is universal or not at all. You don't get justice for all, you don't get justice for Ninoy. You don't get justice by jailing those who committed or commit the same or more spectacular crimes than Erap, you don't get justice simply by not pardoning Erap.

Just as well, while it's true, as Ramos' reference to South Korea shows, that to be pardoned you've got to admit your crimes and apologize to the nation first, it's even truer, as the same example of South Korea shows, that to pardon anyone you've got to have the moral authority to do so. What Ramos fails to mention is that Chun and Roh's successor, Kim Dae-jung, also held reasonably high ground to pardon them—he was a former dissident whom they sentenced to death in their time—as well as the ironclad legal one of being the duly elected president of his country. GMA has neither. She is widely perceived to have cheated in the last elections, to go by the surveys, and is just as widely perceived, not least by the PERC, to be more corrupt than Erap.

While at this, what Ramos fails to mention is that, as the South Korean case shows, to be pardoned you have to wait for a higher authority to pardon you after you have apologized to the nation. You may not pardon yourself, or worse reward yourself for your crime. Lest we forget, GMA herself never admitted her crime of stealing the vote—she herself ruled calling Garci was just a "lapse in judgment"—and after apologizing robotically to the nation ("I looked into your eyes and saw no contrition there," as Susan Roces put it) pardoned herself and decreed the terms of her pardon to include continuing to serve as President.

Still while at this, what Ramos fails to mention is that he went along with this monstrosity and propped up GMA just when the nation had discovered the principle of Justice upon Erap, Justice upon GMA. He (and Jose de Venecia) should really stop lecturing this country about the finer aspects of morality.

That brings us to the heart of the matter, which is that the issue of Erap's pardon isn't as black and white as we always want things to be. The question isn't just whether Erap deserves to be pardoned or not, the question is also whether GMA has the right to pardon him or not.

Whether Erap deserves to be pardoned or not, we can debate to our hearts' content and come to no conclusion. I myself share the outrage of NOPE, Bayan Muna and the various participants of Edsa II, about the pardon and agree with them that this sends a wrong signal to the corrupt and unholy, past, present and future.

That is so notwithstanding that I also know that public opinion favors a pardon. That was clear in the SWS survey before the Sandiganbayan convicted Erap—which is probably why Malacañang thought of this pardon even then; this is by no means "hasty," as critics charge—that showed the majority amenable to a pardon immediately or soon if Erap were found guilty. It's not really stupidity on the part of the *masa*. It's human nature. It's hard to be furious about the sins of the past, or even remember them, when you are bombarded daily with the sins of the present. That's what happened too during Cory's time: The pillage of the Marcos cronies receded in public memory with the spectacle of the pillage of Kamag-anak Inc.

We can debate to our hearts' content whether Erap deserves to be pardoned or not, but we may not debate whether GMA has the right to pardon Erap or not: She does not. Hell, we may not even debate if she has the right to rule this country, much less pardon anyone: She does not—not after "Hello Garci." This is one case where the onus of proof of innocence or guilt is put more on the judge than the judged. The question isn't just: Should Erap be pardoned? The question is: Should GMA be pardoned?

That is for neither of them to decide. That is for the people to. There will be a day of reckoning, and if the surveys are also to be believed, that should come immediately, or soon.

The prosecutor's lament

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE WHY LAST FRIDAY should be a sad day for the Special Prosecutor. After all, he poured all his energy and gave up so many things to be able to do the best he could in his mission as Special Prosecutor. He, in fact, had to go on leave from his teaching chores at the Ateneo Law School. (Incidentally we are glad he is back.) But I am afraid that seeking the reversal of the President's pardon of Joseph Estrada can be more taxing and less rewarding than his efforts to pin down the former president.

Whether one likes it or not, we have inherited from the British system via American constitutionalism and through the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions a judicial system which embodies a quality of mercy that is not strained. I do not call it untainted, but only unstrained. "The grace of a pardon," as Justice McKenna once remarked, "may be only a pretense ... involving consequences of even greater disgrace than those from which it purports to relieve." But the power of executive clemency as we have it now is the least limitable of the arsenal of executive powers.

As I pointed out last Monday, our Constitution places only three specific limits on the pardoning power. First, unlike in the American system, it can be exercised only after final conviction. Second, pardon can be granted for election offenses only upon the recommendation of the Commission on Elections. Third, pardon may not be granted in cases of impeachment. Let me elaborate further on this last one.

What is there in impeachment cases that is impervious to pardon? We have to go back first of all to the nature of a pardon. "A pardon is an act of grace, proceeding from the power entrusted with the execution of the laws, which exempts the individual, on whom it is bestowed, from the punishment the law inflicts for a crime he has committed." From this it is clear that there can be no pardon if no punishment has been imposed. Thus the prohibition regarding cases of impeachment can have applicability only if the impeachment process had ended in the imposition of a punishment, which it did not.

Joseph Estrada received no punishment from the impeachment that was started against him. The impeachment process was never concluded. In fact, even if it had been concluded, the only punishment he could have received would have been removal from office and disqualification from holding office in the government.

But Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did not restore him to the presidency. She could not have done so even if she wanted to. Neither did she lift a disqualification from office that would have been imposed by an impeachment court, that is, the Senate. Rather, the disqualification she partially lifted was one imposed by the Sandiganbayan upon the plea of the Special Prosecutor. This had nothing to do with his failed impeachment. To say that it resulted from impeachment would dim the luster of the Special Prosecutor's success.

I also said earlier that there are only three specific limitations on the power to pardon. Is there perhaps an unspecified limitation?

We do have that provision in the Constitution which says that judicial power includes the power "to determine whether or not there has been grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any instrumentality of agency of the government." We know and we have seen this applied to independent bodies like the Commission on Elections, the Commission on Appointments and the Electoral Tribunals. It can be applied by the Court to the President even if ever so gingerly.

Did President Arroyo commit such grave abuse of discretion? If we must go by the prescriptions of the Supreme Court, as indeed we must, we will see that it is not easy to commit such mortal sin.

Ponder how the Supreme Court has defined such grave abuse. "By grave abuse of discretion is meant such capricious and whimsical exercise of judgment as is equivalent to lack of jurisdiction. The abuse of discretion must be patent and gross as to amount to an evasion of positive duty or a virtual refusal to perform a duty enjoined by law, or to act at all in contemplation of law, as where the power is exercised in an arbitrary and despotic manner by reason of passion or hostility."

Anyone challenging the validity of the pardon of Estrada will have to measure the action of President Arroyo against this definition. It will not be a walk in the park.

But would it not be enough to say that Acting Secretary Agnes Devanadera was hasty in her recommendation (I know she is a fast worker!), and that the President was hastier still, and that she should have consulted more with her Cabinet? Here we must go back to fundamentals and to the general nature of executive power in our system.

In the oft-quoted words of Justice Jose P. Laurel, "in our presidential system the President is the Executive of the Government of the Philippines, and no other [is]. The heads of the executive departments occupy political positions and hold office in an advisory capacity, and, in the language of Thomas Jefferson 'should be of the President's bosom confidence,' and, in the language of Attorney General Cushing, 'are subject to the direction of the President.' "

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wrote a book about the American presidency and called it "The Imperial Presidency." Ours is not far from that. The exercise of the pardoning power, like it or not, is one form of imperial eruption.

Keeping the people poor

COMMENTARY

Francisco F. Claver, S.J.
John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

THREE WEEKS AGO, A MANILA DAILY (NOT the INQUIRER) editorialized about something I found most puzzling. The title of the piece was "Losing a world heritage site." Unesco was reported to be threatening to take away the World Heritage title from the Banaue and Ifugao rice terraces for the people's failure to stop their deterioration and for sundry violations of conditions imposed on them by the award.

When I read the column, I asked myself: How could Unesco take away an award it had never given? For the fact is the rice terraces of Banaue and Ifugao were never the sole recipients of the World Heritage award. The entire Cordillera rice-terracing complex was, and this includes not only the Ifugao terraces but those as well of the Mountain Province, Kalinga, Benguet—and possibly the Tinguian areas of Abra.

On the other hand, I can see where Unesco could make the mistake: Ifugao, and Banaue municipality especially, had been arrogating, in quite a solipsistic manner, the World Heritage title to themselves, and it seems Unesco, the very awarder of the title, had fallen for their false claim. But why should it listen to them and not consult its own records?

Whether Unesco goes through with what it is reported to be thinking of doing, un-understandable as it is, the sad fact is that the rice terraces of Ifugao in a number of places are in real danger of disappearing altogether from worm-infestation and erosion, both of which are often the result of neglect. But the rice terraces of the rest of the Cordilleras? They still are outstandingly worthy of the award.

A few years ago I was asked by the Ifugao Save-the-Terraces-Movement to give a talk on their besetting problem. I did, but they didn't like what I said. "If you want to save those terraces," I told them, "keep the people poor!" They knew well what I was talking about: Only the poor have the patience—and the need—to do the back-breaking work required to keep those terraces productive and viable.

As more and more native Ifugao (and other Igorots for that matter) go to college and become degreed professionals, they become less and less the kind of people needed to keep the terraces healthy. So too the Save-the-Terraces-Movement stalwarts themselves, I would think, since most of them are government officials and business people: I'm not sure they will be willing to dirty their hands working those fields themselves to do their bit to preserve them—although probably out of pride for their cultural heritage, they should. And the more the rice fields are left untended and un-worked, the easier prey they become to worm-infestation and erosion. (The fact is not too well-known, but the terraces of Banaue are not faced with stone walls, like most in the Cordilleras, and hence are always in danger of erosion.)

The President herself was made aware of the problem at least two or three years ago and her response, as reported in the papers, was something to the effect that she would see if she could get some experts from Thailand to advice the people on what to do. I haven't heard if such experts have been brought in—but I would think, with all due respect to the President, that they are not what is most needed.

The main problem in regard to the viability of those terraces, at least in Banaue, is the unresolved one between what I would call the "beauty makers" and the "beauty merchants": the beauty makers are the farmers who work on the terraces for the rice they grow, the beauty merchants the owners of hotels and restaurants, the gift shops and travel-bureaus—business people who make their living from the tourism industry.

And the heart of the problem? It is the most distressing and elemental one of the unjust sharing of wealth. There is wealth in the beauty of the Banaue rice terraces. Tourists come by the thousands every year from all over the world and nation to admire their beauty. So tourism is a big money earner. But except perhaps for those becostumed old men and women who have their pictures taken by tourists at Viewpoint in Banaue, the actual tillers of the soil, the beauty makers, don't get much, if anything at all, from the tourism industry that their terraces make possible. And profitable. All the gain goes to the merchants. I feel strongly that a solution to the problem of the terraces will not be found easily if the glaring imbalance—a clear lack of basic justice—is not remedied.

That part of the problem is what those terraces-savers should be concerned most about, not just how to get funding for the preservation of the terraces or how to get the President to act on her promises about those Thai experts. As things stand there seems to be more concern for the beauty merchants than for the beauty makers. But without the latter, the former will have nothing to sell. Except perhaps one enormously eroded mountain!

The price of power

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

AFTER EDSA DOS, I EXPRESSED THE OPINION, mainly in private, that having stepped down, and having avoided bloodshed, Joseph Estrada should be left alone in Greenhills and left to wallow in his riches. Ouster, under the circumstances, was enough. When Edsa Dos forces insisted he should be thrown in jail, again, I expressed reservations on the basis of the country remaining deeply divided, and on the principle that you do not kick a man when he is down. When the pressure to charge him and try him proved irresistible, I cautioned that pending the trial, he should still be allowed to stay in Greenhills, as humiliating him would not serve the interest of justice.

After having gone against her instincts and ordering the arrest of Estrada, President Macapagal-Arroyo always proved ambiguous about the trial and a conviction: from Day One, she had preferred exile as a solution. If that proved impossible, she would be persistent in offering a pardon. Meanwhile, she expressed no dissatisfaction with the trial being dragged out, since a quick resolution of the case wouldn't do her any good, and while a drawn-out trial also served Estrada's purposes, neither side seemed capable of figuring out what a possible compromise could be.

And so, earlier this year I proposed that Estrada cut the Gordian knot and run for office. It offered up a possibility for the public to resolve something the court at the time seemed unable to do. Estrada preferred to continue posturing from his Tanay rest house. After the election, when it became clear Estrada's endorsement was not as powerful as people had expected, and when the President for her part saw the public mood (nationally speaking) was completely against her, the trial began to move toward a resolution. On the day the verdict was handed down, both Estrada and Arroyo loyalists discovered they stood larger in their own minds than in the eyes of a public that shrugged off Estrada's conviction. Both saw themselves in the mirror, and didn't like what they saw: they saw themselves as sliding, inexorably, too, into the has-been column of the political divide.

With neither side having shown themselves as particularly devoted to the law, I felt that the whole thing should be done with, and Estrada pardoned. I did end up qualifying that opinion with a further opinion that a pardon shouldn't include his taking home the loot. The opinion of Prof. Popoy de Vera struck me, which was, that the Filipino concept of justice is restitution and not retribution. As he later told me, the public view was that Estrada shouldn't keep his loot, and having been disgraced, he should bow out of politics.

Estrada, for his part, had angled for nothing less than a full, sweeping pardon. The President, on the other hand, anxious as she was to grant that pardon, had to be able to throw some sort of bone to her constituents and so, made a counter-proposal: Estrada should accept a conditional pardon. What seems to have finally clinched the deal was something personal and not political—the widely held assumption that Estrada's mother doesn't have very much longer left to live.

And so, they sealed the deal. I am not surprised by the pardon, but I think it requires interpretation.

It tells us that the President has more to gain in terms of good will from the Estrada constituency than she has to lose from Edsa Dos forces who will be angry, upset and shocked, but who in the end lack what matters most to the President: numbers, whether in terms of public protests or going to the polls. That political math has been clear since May 2001: and the losers here are the Edsa Dos veterans who are shocked and appalled, only now, not least because the folly of their support for the President has been exposed, not to the President but to themselves. As far as Estrada's supporters are concerned he made the best out of a raw deal.

In a nation where symbolism trumps substance, Estrada never had to suffer for his rhetoric, and the President never gave the legal process room to reach its final conclusion; there wasn't even a token effort at proving justice could be tempered with mercy; instead, mercenary calculations were passed off as executive mercy.

Much as everyone saw the pardon coming, what I don't think anyone outside of official circles expected was for it to be used so crudely, so patently politically: a historic verdict required a historic demonstration of presidential statesmanship; instead, it was a tool used to blunt the effects of embarrassing headlines resulting from a Senate hearing; and it was a brusque dismissal of those who, all these eventful years, stubbornly insisted on giving the President the benefit of the doubt because she had to be, somehow, better than her predecessor.

What happens next? A free man, Estrada is now just another ex-president. He can begin investing, quite heavily, in the political futures of his sons. However, his starring role is at an end. His allies among the political leaders must now attend to their own futures, because Estrada now belongs to the past. Jejomar Binay is now the true leader of the traditional political opposition.

And as for the President, it's back to the War Room because so many other fights still need to be fought, and any relief she obtains always proves increasingly temporary.

To those who were at Edsa Dos, but who wouldn't budge in 2005 and 2006, and who are suddenly filled with outrage over Ms Arroyo pardoning Estrada, what did you expect? You made this not only possible, but inevitable. Edsa Dos was not betrayed by this pardon, it was betrayed when the President tried to steal the 2004 election, when she refused to be held accountable by means of the impeachment process, and when she very nearly imposed martial law in 2006 but was foiled by Nonong Cruz. I am glad you now see what others saw—years ago.

An Indian-American wins in the Deep South

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

WOODRIDGE, ILLINOIS—OCTOBER IS PROBABLY THE best month of the year for visiting the United States and one reason for this is the spectacular landscape that some writers have described as the "greatest show on earth." The annual change in color of tree leaves from summer green to red, yellow, brown, or any combination of these provides us with a scenery unlike any that we can come across at home.

October also means the World Series in baseball and this year, for the first time in the history of its franchise, the Colorado Rockies of the National League face the Boston Red Sox, the American League champions.

Whatever happened to Philippine baseball? Before the Pacific War baseball was one of the more popular sports in the country with Canlubang providing some of the best baseball teams in the Manila Bay Baseball League.

* * *

A week ago, the phone rang with the bad news from Manila about a bomb explosion in Makati. The following day, which was Saturday, Oct. 20, I checked the two dailies that are delivered to my son's home hoping to get more details on the incident. The New York Times had nothing on the front page or even in its news summary on Page 2, which usually carries a brief lineup of the highlights of the previous day. Page 3 had a picture of PNP Chief Avelino Razon viewing the scene at the Glorietta shopping mall. The caption read: "Eight die in blast at a Philippine mall. A midday explosion killed eight people, wounding scores and left a crater near an escalator yesterday at a shopping mall popular with affluent shoppers in Manila's financial district. The National Police Chief, Avelino Razon, Jr., had few details but said a bomb was to blame. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said the police and military were 'on their highest alert.'"

The Chicago Tribune had a similar item on Page 13 under a section "Around the World."

It is clear that we are almost out of America's radar screen but given her problems in Iraq, Iran, Afganistan, Pakistan and other places in the Middle East, it is understandable why an explosion in Makati is not something that would arouse much interest here.

Incidentally, while the New York Times has a section on Letters to the Editor in its editorial page, it also has a section on Page 2 under the heading: "Corrections: For the Record." Here it invites readers "who are dissatisfied with a response or who are concerned about the paper's journalistic integrity" to contact the public editor, Clarke Hoyt.

* * *

With the US presidential elections just a year away, Hillary Clinton, who recently celebrated her 60th birthday, continued to lead her opponents in the race for the Democratic nomination. Barack Obama and John Edwards are her closest rivals. This early, reports indicate that the Republican National Committee appears to be concentrating its resources in anticipation of a Clinton nomination, virtually ignoring her rivals.

On the other hand, the Republicans, at this point, appear not to have any clear front runner with former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney leading the pack.

At the state level, the son of immigrants from India took over the governorship of a southern state. Bobby Jindal, who was born Piyush Jindal in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1971, was elected governor with 54 percent of the vote. His father was an engineer from the Punjab region in India. Hawaii has had a Filipino-American governor; the state of Washington had a Chinese-American governor; and now, Louisiana has given the United States its first Indian-American state chief executive.

To better appreciate Jindal's victory, one must keep in mind that Louisiana is one of the states of the Deep South where color has long been part of local politics. Louisiana is also one of the poorest states in America with a long history of corruption and cronyism in government affairs.

Jindal finished at Brown University in Rhode Island and was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. A Roman Catholic convert, he became the head of the Department of Health and Hospitals in Louisiana at the age of 24 and later headed the statewide University of Louisiana school system. He also served as assistant secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services under President George Bush.

In his victory speech on the night of his election, Jindal paid tribute to his Indian parents: "I want to take just a moment to thank my parents ... My dad was the first and only one of nine kids to even go to high school. Like most of you, my parents walked a much harder road than I have ever walked and I want to thank them publicly for their sacrifices for me and my brother. My parents have seen what I have seen, that in America the only barrier to success is your willingness to work hard and play by the rules."

Jindal said his first act is to call for the passage of "real ethics reform with real teeth." "Ethics reform is the first step in winning the public trust. It is the first step to unlocking our future. It is the first step to growing our economy and bringing great jobs to Louisiana." His closing lines were: "To our government, which has been too corrupt ... we can change, we must change, we will change ... change begins tonight."

He sounds like most politicians. Let us hope he delivers. New Orleans still has a long way to go after Hurricane Katrina. Unless the state government puts in greater efforts, the city may not be able to regain its former reputation as a major tourist attraction in the South.

Incidentally, my very first visit to New Orleans was as a young Air Force lieutenant some 50 years ago. My colleagues and I headed for Bourbon Street not for its music but to take in some of the many strip joints in the area. As we walked into the bars, I was asked to show some identification to prove that I was 21 years of age. In one of the stops we made, Blaze Starr, supposedly one of the favorite girlfriends of a powerful Louisiana governor, was the star attraction.

* * *

My favorite "Bombay" was the late Mayor Ramon D. Bagatsing. Also a descendant of Indian immigrants. Bagatsing started his public career as a patrolman in the Manila Police Department and ended up as the longest serving mayor of Manila from 1972 to 1986.

Bagatsing was at Plaza Miranda on Aug. 21, 1971 when grenades exploded at a Liberal party rally. His right leg was amputated but he continued to be an active mayor, using a prosthetic leg.

Bagatsing passed away last year at the age of 89.

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The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Pardon mocks values we teach

WE, THE OFFICERS AND MEMbers of the College Faculty Association of Miriam College and veterans of Edsa II, vehemently denounce the granting of pardon to former President Joseph Estrada.

After our nation went through the turmoil of Edsa II because of his scandal-ridden presidency, after the riotous response of his followers in "Edsa III," after six long years that the Ombudsman spent in careful, courageous and thorough presentation of witnesses and documents before the Sandiganbayan and after the vigorous defense by his brilliant legal team, he was found guilty of plunder beyond reasonable doubt.

Our criminal justice system has affirmed the judgment that our people rendered in People Power II. The nation is now supposed to be in a position to move on, with its belief in our justice system restored and with some of our national pride retrieved. We should now look forward to making other corrupt officials accountable before our people and our justice system. But we cannot do all this with the grant of pardon to Estrada. Clearly, the government would not let us move on.

For political expediency, legislators and Malacañang offered pardon for the unrepentant and arrogant convict; one who shamelessly plundered and disgraced our beloved nation has been absolved of his crime by President Macapagal-Arroyo who herself is hounded by so many scandals.

Miriam College stands for truth, justice, peace and integrity. Truth was impartially bared with the Sandiganbayan decision. Justice will not be served if Estrada escapes his sentence. And peace will be a long time coming because with this precedent, grafters will continue to rob our country, unafraid of the full force of the law; and socioeconomic disparities in our country will worsen.

Education is extremely difficult when the school teaches good citizenship while the country's leaders make a mockery of it. For the sake of our children and our future, pardon should not be given without Estrada (not his lawyers) apologizing to the Filipino people and without justice being rendered first.

—RAUL F. ALEJANDRINO,
president,
Miriam College Faculty
Association,
Caritas CFA Office,
Miriam College,
Loyola Heights,
Katipunan Road, Quezon City

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Straight-out insult

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE news report "After denials, local officials own cash gifts." (INQUIRER, 10/24/07) After all the ruckus, the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) finally admitted to handing out the money. This is a straight-out insult to the intelligence of Filipinos.

Why were there no vouchers? Are public monies handed out so casually, in paper bags even? Shouldn't there be more internal controls in the disbursement of government funds? And if the monies were given out under the auspices of the LPP, shouldn't the recipients have been made aware of the gifts beforehand?

The simplistic and highly irregular explanation of the LPP needs to be investigated vigorously. Enough already.

—RALPH PENA,
ralph.pena@mac.com

Nothing wrong with Miriam 'mission'

THANK YOU FOR INFORMING the public about Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's campaign for a seat in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). ("Miriam wants to campaign for int'l court on 'official mission'," INQUIRER, 10/18/07)

It is both a long-standing tradition and standard Senate procedure to mark "On Official Mission" any senator discharging government functions, such as delivering a speech or even crowning a fiesta queen. There is nothing wrong if the senator requests to be marked "On Official Mission," after all, the ICJ bid is not her personal project but a project of the Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Candidates of other countries follow more or less the same campaign schedule as that of the senator's. If the Philippines does not campaign in the same way, it will never have a serious chance of winning the ICJ seat. Election in the World Court is mostly a political process.

Senator Santiago's foreign relations committee has already concluded public hearings on the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement according to the published schedule. Subsequent hearings were set upon the request of Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Senator Santiago will discharge her Senate functions in between her trips abroad. She must follow the campaign schedule set by the DFA, despite suffering from clinically diagnosed chronic fatigue syndrome. Thus, she will have a very grueling year.

—FATIMA LIPP
D. PANONTONGAN,
deputy chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Miriam
Defensor-Santiago,
mdsmediabureau@yahoo.com

P1B fund not enough

THE P1 BILLION BUDGET ALLOTTED BY REP. Edcel Lagman for family planning causes a great deal of concern for us, health care workers at the forefront in taking care of our very sick countrymen.

I am one of the few nurses who chose to work in the Philippines despite the pest-infested health facilities in our country and the lure of high-tech amenities abroad. Since my graduation from the University of the Philippines in 1993, I have worked in government hospitals in Manila and under-served barangays in Laguna.

Many of our people endure their ailments until they can hardly breathe because of the skyrocketing costs of medical care. In hospitals, we have had children whose limbs were as thin as a twig and whose bellies, bloated by parasitism, made them gasp for breath. The children had only a few days to live—like the adults with end-stage tuberculosis who came to the emergency room vomiting blood. The few coins left in their pockets were not enough to bring them to TB referral centers, while their families had their last meal a day before.

Such is the heartrending reality that we health workers confront every day in our country. And our plight is the same as our patients' since we don't have the needed supplies and facilities to take care of them. Oftentimes, we recycle medical gadgets; we improvise devices to aid the breathing of our critically ill patients. Gloves are so scarce that many times we find ourselves handling bodily secretions with our bare hands. Masks are considered rare commodities in government hospitals. So, it is not surprising that many of us health workers contract TB and other communicable diseases ourselves. This further aggravates our long-standing problem re staff shortage where one nurse takes care of 20, 30 or even 80 patients.

We need a higher budget for the health care personnel and facilities. The condoms and IUDs will not help us save the life of a patient bleeding internally because of dengue, or an infant crying without tears because of severe diarrhea. The majority of our illnesses are due to malnutrition and are preventable—diarrhea, parasitism, respiratory infections, etc. We need funds to disseminate health information to our remotest barangays. Aside from strengthening the primary health care services at the grass-roots level, we need to equip the secondary and tertiary health facilities of the government especially in the countryside.

To allocate P1 billion for population management does not make sense in this poverty-stricken, illness-plagued country. All the more, when we hear many countries actually promoting population growth.

We need a higher budget for health personnel and facilities to be able to properly take care of our sick countrymen. We need food especially for our children who will suffer in their whole lifetime the consequences of hunger in their first years of life.

—LOURDES MARIE TEJERO,
assistant professor,
University of the Philippines Manila

Matubis fed wrong info

I WRITE IN REACTION TO THE OCT. 18 LETter of Jesus Matubis Jr. regarding the Maynilad digging at H. Lopez Boulevard corner Infanta Street, Balut, Tondo, Manila. I want to inform Matubis that I did not send the picture to the INQUIRER.

What I did was to text Metro Citizen's Call, seeking help to hasten the almost two-month-old MWSS digging. I texted second week of September and I think the INQUIRER took the photo of the unfinished excavation work first week of October. It was published Oct. 8, 2007. If the photo had been taken earlier, it would have shown a worse scenario.

Matubis stated in his letter that the digging was finished as early as Sept. 6, 2007 and that the "area became passable to vehicles on Sept. 13, 2007." I think he was given the wrong information by his subordinates.

For the whole month of September, we had to bear with anger-provoking traffic caused by the unfinished Maynilad digging. The fact is, the digging was permanently cemented only late in the second week of October. I should know better; I live here.

I don't blame Matubis, I'm sure he was fed incorrect information by his men who wanted to earn "*pogi* points." I just want to let him know what really happened.

I want to thank the INQUIRER for helping us get the attention of Maynilad. Likewise, we are glad to know that Maynilad has found a way to improve water service in Balut, Tondo.

—ALICIA F. ESTRELLADO,
aaestrellado@yahoo.com.ph

Magkasama tayo sa tuloy-tuloy na pag-angat

Tuloy-tuloy n'yo po kaming unang
pinakikinggan sa Mega Manila,
kung kaya't tuloy-tuloy na nangunguna
ang DZMM sa latest
AC Nielsen Media Research Survey.

Inspirado po kaming maglingkod para sa
ika-aangat ng inyong buhay.

Maraming, maraming salamat,
Kapamilya.

ALL DAYS

TIMEBLOCK	RANK	STATION	RATING Q3	SHARE Q3
6am-12mn	1	DZMM	1.0	7.9
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Source: Comparative Station Performance of AM Radio Stations
Q3, 2007 NMR Mega Manila (Radio Audience Measurement)

DZMM RADYO PATROL SAIS TRENTA
DZMM TELERADYO

Una sa Balita. Una sa Public Service.

Estrada watched by opposition allies

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE OPPOSITION IS MONITORing closely the words and actions of former President Joseph Estrada for tell-tale signs that he has changed his colors and has jumped over to the side of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"His future actions and demeanor in confronting issues and controversies hounding Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo can judge his political persuasion. Accepting a position in government under Mrs. Arroyo will be an instant giveaway," said Sen. Panfilo Lacson in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III said Estrada's acceptance of a government position from her nemesis would certainly "confuse" his opposition allies.

"He was one of the leaders of the opposition, it will be confusing if he will have to support all these things represented by President Arroyo. It will be a complete turnaround and it will be difficult for his loyalists to understand," said Aquino in an interview.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. doubted Estrada would accept a government position from the President because it would be "suicidal."

Beyond redemption

"Gloria is beyond redemption and anyone who allies with her would also self-destruct along with the administration," said Pimentel.

"I want to emphasize that we in the Senate opposition are not going to change tact or our direction simply because of the pardon. We will continue to stand up to fight for the rights of the people," he said.

Except for thanking the President in his speech on the night of his return to Polk Street as a free man, Estrada has so far not shown any wavering from his stand as an opposition, said Aquino.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal said the pardon only legitimized Ms Arroyo's power grab in 2001. She said that Estrada's acceptance of any position in the Arroyo administration "would make a mockery of the six years he spent in jail and destroy whatever principles he has left."

Politics of transaction

Lacson urged members of the opposition to continue their "fiscalizing" role and not let themselves be affected by what he called "politics of transaction."

"This has dominated the overall policy direction of this administration in all the years of its existence," he said.

"There's too much corruption and abuse as there is evident poverty and unequal justice and wealth everywhere that nobody, not even Erap, can get in the way of the opposition's role to help provide the check and balance as well as a better alternative to the misgovernance of the Arroyo regime," he said.

Aquino said he continued to endorse the pardon of Estrada not only because of old age but also because granting him executive clemency could pave the way for true dialogue and bring down the tension between the warring factions in the country.

'He didn't know what to do that day'

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE MORNING AFTER HIS RElease from more than six years of detention, 70-year-old Joseph Estrada found himself wondering what to do on his first day of total freedom.

The former President and convicted plunderer could not help but point this out to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, a close friend who had worked for his presidential pardon, when he called up Estrada on Saturday morning.

"He said he did not know what he was going to do (that day)," a chuckling Puno recalled Estrada telling him.

"So I told him maybe you could go to Promenade and watch a movie, boss," he said in a phone interview.

But his suggestion apparently startled Estrada who then asked Puno what he meant by "Promenade."

Puno said he told Estrada that it was part of the Greenhills commercial complex in San Juan, which is near the neighborhood of the famous resident at No. 1 Polk Street.

The secretary later said Estrada might have been joking about not knowing about the Greenhills hangout.

Anyway, he said he did not think Estrada went out that day.

Estrada did, though, leaving his posh residence to visit his ailing mother in the hospital.

Puno said that Estrada again told him to convey to President Macapagal-Arroyo his and his family's appreciation for the pardon granted him on Friday.

Estrada also thanked him for his help and told him how he would not forget it, said Puno.

Puno said that he later told the President about Estrada's message. "OK. Good, good" was Ms Arroyo's reply, he said.

He said Ms Arroyo had already "moved ahead from this issue and gone to the next difficult one, which is getting all her economic projects implemented."

RESIGN NOW!
RESIGN NOW!
RESIGN NOW!

MEMBERS of the militant women's group Gabriela call on President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign during a rally at Mendiola as part of National Women's Day of Protest.

JESS YUSON

Estrada backs away from GMA-quit call

From page A1

backed uprising in 2001 that "unconstitutionally" removed him from power.

Estrada noted that it was Puno who "invented" his constructive resignation, an act that violated his constitutional rights as the then President.

"Haven't they learned from their mistakes during the Edsa Dos? Our country has gone from bad to worse [since then]. I don't believe that these elitists and church leaders should decide the fate of our country. It's the majority who should have a say now," he stressed, strongly indicating his aversion to another people power.

No deal

But he reiterated that there were no strings attached or an agreement forged between him and the administration in his acceptance of executive clemency.

"There was no deal. I thanked her last Friday because it is the right thing to do as our Filipino values dictate," he explained.

Speaking like the true "father of the masses" his supporters hold him up to be, Estrada pointed out that the elite should never dictate to the poor Filipinos who have been helping sustain the government through their dollar remittances from abroad.

'Hello Garci'

Estrada himself had called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo at the height of last year's "Hello Garci" controversy which suggested that she rigged the 2004 presidential elections. She has denied any wrongdoing.

Like former President Corazon Aquino, Estrada had clamored for a transition government to replace the Arroyo administration and establish a system of governance designed for systematic changes and radical reforms to ensure lasting solutions to poverty and corruption that have tormented the nation.

He had even expressed a willingness to lead the transition government while it was looking for a permanent replacement.

Not seeking public office

The 70-year-old Estrada yesterday repeated his earlier statement that he would no longer run for any government office and would rather spend his remaining years in the "full service" of the poor.

But when asked if he would entertain thoughts of entering politics again in the future, he replied, "It's up to the people to decide."

He also expressed no inclination in joining the National Anti-Poverty Commission, saying that his attention was more focused on linking up with nongovernment organizations to pursue his pro-poor programs.

Among the projects he cited was the "white revolution," which he had initiated as then senator by authoring the Philippine Carabao Act to propagate the animal to ensure more production of quality milk for farmers and poor schoolchildren.

He mentioned visiting the first carabao center in the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija, which he planned to replicate in the Visayas and Mindanao with the help of former Sen. Leticia Shahani.

"The government now has competent people in the antipoverty commission. Now, I would like more to work with the private sector," said Estrada, who had spent his first Sunday as a free man with his grandchildren.

Erap pardon could lead to fall of President

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Malacañang had a chance to lynch him.

Estrada is now a free man, with political rights fully restored by executive clemency, not prompted by humanitarian considerations but more so by the crass demands of political expediency.

The pardon came in the wake of breaches of legal procedures governing equal treatment of citizens charged with criminal offenses.

Extraordinary leniency

Estrada enjoyed exceptional treatment that affronted citizens' conception of fair and equal administration of justice. The exemptions reinforced their cynicism that the powerful and influential are above the law.

No convicted criminal has been treated with more extraordinary leniency than Estrada. Special rules were made for him in the effort to buy peace with his supporters.

When Estrada visited San Juan City Hall upon his release, he was unrepentant. He told some 3,000 supporters, "I may have committed mistakes in my career in public service, but I assure you that corruption is not one of them."

The President granted the pardon on three grounds: Estrada is 70 years old and qualifies for clemency under the policy of releasing inmates who have reached that age; he had been under detention for six and a half years; and he "has publicly committed to no longer seek elective office."

The real reason was spelled out in the President's speech at the Philippine business conference at Manila Hotel on Friday. She said the pardon was aimed at ending "the single most significant cause of political noise and controversy" in her tumultuous presidency.

Force for righteousness

She sought to make the pardon "a powerful force for righteousness, compassion, healing, national stability and advancement." She said "the people deserve peace, order and political stability. We have seen through many upheavals."

She said that if "I have showed concern for the personal circumstances of the former President, it is not a sign of diminished determination to see justice done. It is our sensitivity to the feelings of the segments of our *masa* who continue to identify with his personal circumstances."

The official reasons are absolute rubbish. They conceal the narrow objective—political expediency to save her beleaguered presidency.

The extraordinary cutting of corners of legal process and privileges granted to Estrada during the past six years has severely undermined the institutional foundations of the fair administration of justice. The judicial system is the first casualty of the pardon.

The pardon has already divided the country probably more deeply than before. The President has lost ground with the civil society groups that have placed much store by the institutional underpinnings of a fair judicial system.

'Terrible calamity'

Even the Roman Catholic hierarchy was alienated, along with such valued political allies as former President Fidel V. Ramos. In revulsion, Ramos blasted the pardon as "a terrible, terrible calamity to the great majority of the Filipino people who have suffered from the plunder."

There is no sign that the pardon has begun to win over Estrada's urban poor constituency. When Estrada asked 5,000 supporters in San Juan on Friday to applaud Ms Arroyo for giving him back his freedom, they didn't respond. Instead, they booed when the President's name was mentioned.

Ms Arroyo overvalued the Estrada factor as a key to political peace and stability. Similarly, Estrada has overestimated his pivotal role in destabilizing the Arroyo administration.

Estrada was not a key factor in the 8-5 result of the May senatorial election in favor of the opposition. The opposition won more seats not because of Estrada's effort to make it a referendum between him and Ms Arroyo, but because of the damaging issues against the administration.

Dangerous rift

The President's strategists had thought that by removing Estrada from the picture, the pardon would allow her to rebuild her defenses that were crumbling under the pressures of corruption scandals over the broadband contract with the Chinese telecommunication company, ZTE, and the cash payoff to congressmen and governors to bribe them into killing new impeachment complaints against her.

The ZTE deal has opened a dangerous rift between Ms Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia, whose son, Jose de Venecia III, has denounced the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, for intervening in the deal by telling him to back off from pressing his bid to review the contract.

This rift has opened cracks on the façade of the Lakas-led coalition in the House of Representatives. De Venecia can no longer be depended upon to rally the numbers to kill new impeachment moves. There are also plots to unseat him as Speaker.

Nothing but scorn

The opposition members in the House, including Rep. Ronaldo Zamora of San Juan, are treating new impeachment complaints on the strength of the evidence backing these. They are not taking cues from Estrada and, Zamora has said, his fellow opposition would not be influenced by the pardon. The impeachment threat remains.

There are no tectonic shifts in alliances in the House as a result of the pardon. It cannot save the President from a crumbling coalition. She gained nothing but more scorn.

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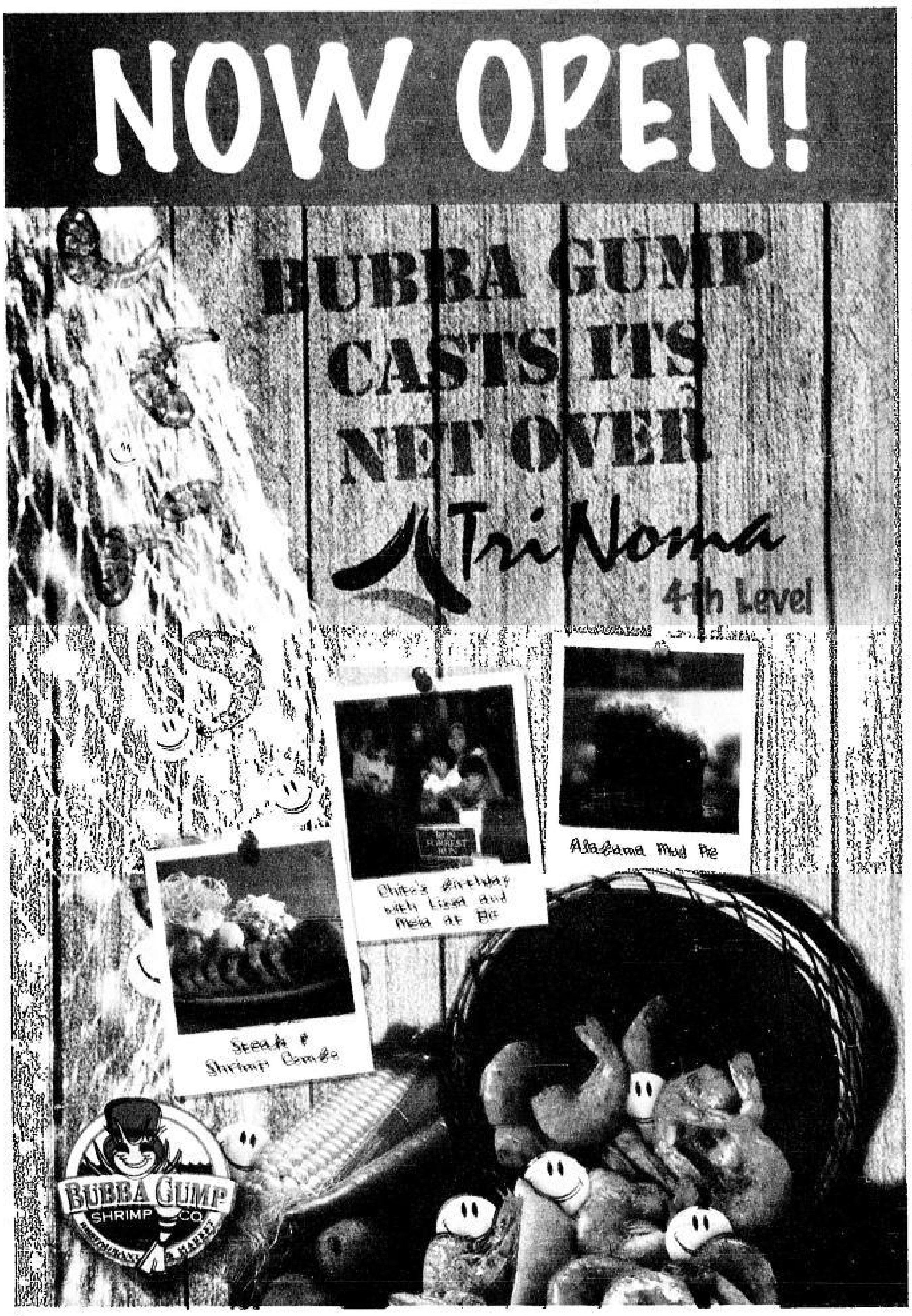
Rebel soldiers offered jobs as VIP bodyguards



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detention without formal charges and a dishonorable dismissal?

The 26 dismissed Rangers found out last week: P5,000 each as a "humanitarian" gesture from the Philippine Army and offers from individuals to serve as bodyguards to VIPs.

One of them, Cpl. Medal Calda, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday that of the amount, P1,000 was for transportation and the rest was the Army's "cash assistance."

Army spokesperson, Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres, said that the money was meant to augment the soldiers' expenses for their immediate needs, such as food and transportation, following their release.

Welfare fund

"It was part of a humanitarian consideration. The Army has a morale and welfare fund for this purpose," Torres said by phone.

Torres added that the Rangers would receive their salaries until the end of this month.

Of course, Calda said, P5,000 was not enough to tide the dismissed Rangers over until they find new jobs to support their families.

He and his fellow Rangers have been offered jobs and recommended for various employment, including serving as bodyguards to very important persons (VIPs).

But Calda, 33, said he was still deciding if he wanted to be a security aide.

3-year-old son

Apparently, Calda wants to be practical. He has a 3-year-old son with his wife Sharon.

"I'd rather have a more stable job," Calda told the INQUIRER in Filipino.

Calda added that the Army's personnel department had offered to "help" the dismissed soldiers, after telling them that they could still appeal the decision of the Army chief, Lt. Col. Alexander Yano.

"But I really don't know what kind of help they meant," he said.

Deeply hurt

Calda said he and his fellow Rangers were deeply hurt by the Army's decision. To them, they had served the Armed Forces of the Philippines well.

Calda had been with the Army for more than nine years and had fought communist guerrillas in Quezon, Mindoro, Laguna, Batangas and several provinces in Bicol, and the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Basilan and Jolo.

His colleagues are just as battle-tested.

Indeed, Calda said, with the assistance of their lawyer, their group would seek a reconsideration of Yano's decision.

He and his fellow soldiers want to leave the service with a clean record, and not with the stigma of a "dishonorable discharge," especially since that they are trying to rebuild their lives and move on, Calda said.

"Some of us still want to go back to the service but for others, it's OK to leave the service but not because of a 'dishonorable discharge,'" he said.

Lost benefits

Calda emphasized that the dismissed soldiers were aware that it would be difficult for them to find employment with a sullied record.

Moreover, they would lose all the benefits and privileges that they had worked for as part of the military.

"Lucky for those who would be recommended for work by influential people. But what would happen to you if you'll apply for a job on your own and you'll have to say that your dismissal from the service was because of a dishonorable discharge?" Calda said.

Intercepted in Sipocot

Calda's unit was accused by the military of attempting to join the supposed mass action at the Edsa Shrine against the Arroyo administration in February last year. They were intercepted at a checkpoint in Sipocot, Camarines Sur.

But their lawyer, Vicente Verdadero, said the unit's movement came from a legitimate order and, in fact, the troops were on their way back to their headquarters in Albay.

Their commanding officer, Lt. Jacon Cordero, and executive officer, Lt. Richiemel Caballes, are still detained at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, with 14 other Rangers and 26 fellow officers from the First Scout Ranger Regiment and Philippine Marines, who were tagged as leaders of the alleged coup attempt.

Without due process

"We were never given due process. It was done just like that. We were given a dishonorable discharge. We are only hoping for an explanation," Calda said.

In dismissing the soldiers, the Army said its investigations found a "preponderance of evidence" that the 26 soldiers violated Articles of War 67 (mutiny) and 97 (conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline).

The soldiers were detained for more than a year at Camp Capinpin without formal charges.

On Wednesday, they were taken from the Army camp and brought to the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, where they were served their discharge notice.

Two days later, the 28 detained military officers expressed their disgust over the dismissal of their men, which they blamed on Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Electoral fraud

In an unsigned statement, the group said that through Yano, the military chief chose to dismiss the Rangers instead of facing their challenge for him to answer allegations that he took part in the electoral fraud in 2004.

The detained military officers, led by former Marine commandant Major Gen. Renato Miranda, former First Scout Ranger Regiment commander, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and Medal of Valor awardee, Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, are charged with mutiny for allegedly leading the botched February coup.

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Scientists scan world ...

From page A1

track ... We will wait until we know there's no tsunami," he said, as everyone in the room closely watched the operation center's main display screen flashing information about the event.

Off Bengkulu, Sumatra

The magnitude readings at first fluctuated until they settled at 7.1 a few minutes later. The map showed that the quake hit some 135 kilometers off the southwestern town of Bengkulu in Sumatra, an area that has been a center of seismic activity in recent years.

The tremor occurred at 4:02 a.m. local time (Indonesia) or 11:02 a.m. in Hawaii, weeks after the Sept. 12 quake in the same area that killed 23 people. Seventeen minutes later, another alert terminal sounded off to signal that surface waves from the epicenter had reached the Pacific though not at destructive levels.

The PTWC, an agency under the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa), readily issued a local tsunami watch for nearby coastal areas.

Relayed to Indonesian authorities, the watch warned that "a local tsunami ... could affect coasts" within 100 kilometers from the epicenter, but cited that "a destructive, widespread tsunami threat does not exist."

Tide gauge

Hunkered down at their terminals, seven scientists were on the operation center's floor anticipating a potential deadly wave. On normal shifts, there would only be two of them. The whole team was waiting for the update from a tide gauge in Padang, Indonesia, the one closest to the quake's epicenter.

The team wanted to confirm whether tide patterns in the area would bring dangerous waves to shore as the gauge was located near the tremor's origin, said Stuart Weinstein, PTWC deputy director.

"I'm so sorry we had to make an earthquake for you guys today. Next time, it won't be so close to home," Weinstein jokingly told the visitors, among whom was a journalist from Indonesia.

"This is perfect timing," joked Director Charles McCreery.

Indeed, what were the chances of a quake happening at the same hour the PTWC was giving a briefing to reporters?

No damage

Around an hour and a half after issuing an initial bulletin, the PTWC ended the local watch raised over Indonesia. It was learned later that there were no known damage, injuries or deaths that resulted from the latest temblor.

"No tsunami waves were observed by the coastal gauge at Padang or by the deep ocean gauge off central Sumatra. Based on this information, the local tsunami watch is ended," read the bulletin.

While primarily tasked with watching over movements within the Pacific Ocean, the warning center looks over the Indian Ocean and surrounding countries as work for a separate warning center for the area continued.

The PTWC works closely with the US Geological Survey, with a partner warning center in Alaska, and with meteorological and geophysical monitoring units around the world for an effective and timely delivery of tsunami warnings to coastal villages near the site of offshore quakes.

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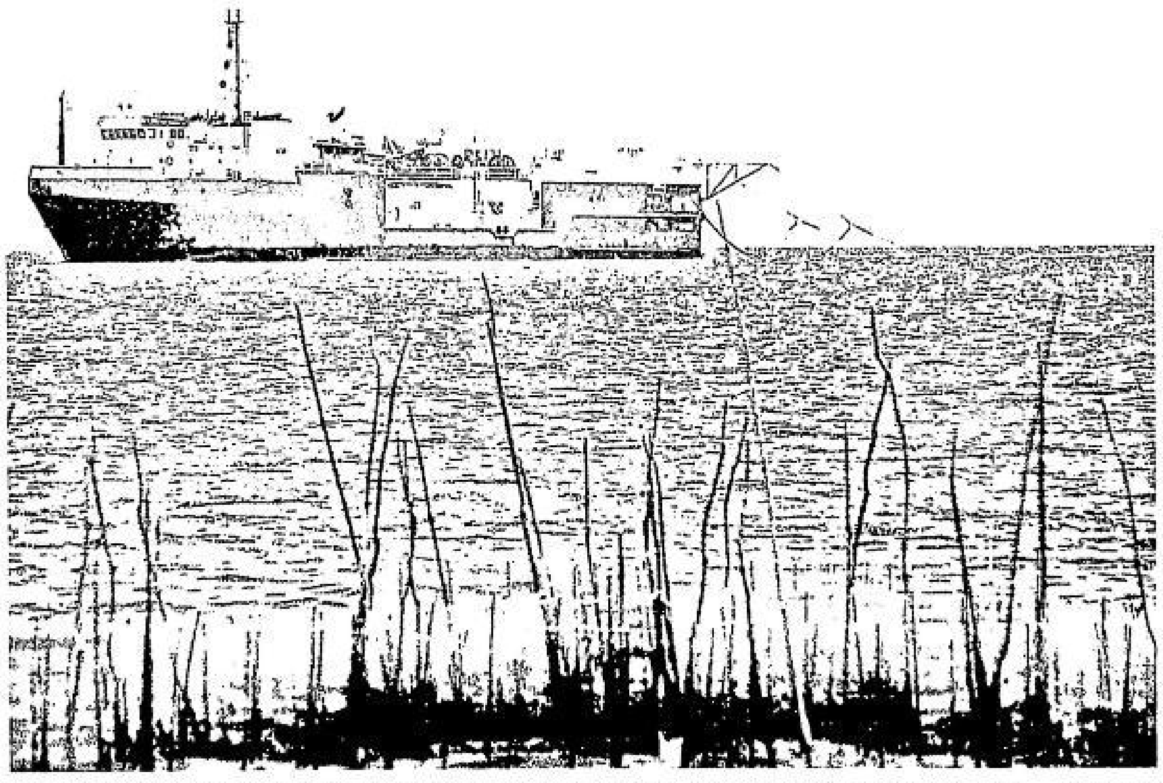
170 scientists urge halt to oil exploration



OIL EXPLORATION in Tañon Strait is being opposed by marine scientists all over the country. FILE PHOTO

By Alex Pal
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—MARINE SCIENTISTS FROM all over the Philippines have called on the government to stop the oil exploration initiated by the Department of Energy in Tañon Strait because of threats it poses on whales, dolphins, fish and other marine creatures, people's livelihood, and potentially irreplaceable and invaluable natural heritage.

The scientists made the call at the end of the 9th National Symposium on Marine Science convened by the Philippine Association of Marine Science in Iloilo City.

Dr. Lemnuel Aragones, associate professor of the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, e-mailed a copy of the resolution to the INQUIRER yesterday, saying it was signed by 170 scientists.

Tañon Strait, located between Cebu and Negros, was declared a protected seascape under Presidential Proclamation No. 1234 by then President Fidel V. Ramos in 1998 because of its extraordinary abundance and diverse assemblage of dolphins and whales.

Eleven of the 25 species found in the Philippines can be sighted in the strait, which is also known as feeding, breeding and resting grounds for the marine mammals, the resolution said.

The scientists said seismic surveys, exploratory drilling and actual oil mining would adversely affect the marine ecosystem and organisms dependent on it.

"Sound is very important to whales and dolphins as they use it for hunting, navigation and communication," the scientists said.

Aragones also has an ongoing study at the Tañon Strait that shows a drop in sightings of spinner dolphins since the DOE-initiated seismic surveys started in 2005.

The scientists said the process used to evaluate the potential impact of seismic surveys and exploratory oil drilling had procedural lapses, lacked transparency and appropriate consultation with stakeholders.

"It failed to seriously and adequately consider substantial scientific evidence on the potential detrimental impacts of such activities to marine animals like mammals and fish," they said.

800 state university students in Laguna cry out for funding

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—MORE than 800 college students here are not sure if they can still continue their schooling next semester.

Since June, the municipality has stopped funding the state-run Polytechnic University of the Philippines' extension.

Thus, the instructors and personnel in the university have yet to get their salaries and allowances, Angelito Roldan, school director, told the INQUIRER.

He said the municipal government should look at the situation of the teachers who were unpaid for the entire semester and the students who were supposed to have their enrollment last week.

On Thursday, more than 600 students, accompanied by their parents and teachers, marched from the campus to the municipal hall to appeal for continued financial support.

Joel Dalud, PUP-SME student council president, said the students were placed in a situation that deprived them of their right to education.

Dalud said most of the students might stop studying if the school closed down.

He said that even if they were transferred to other PUP extensions, they could still not afford the transportation expenses.

A majority of the students are residents of San Pedro and they simply walk to school.

"If we have to save for the P500 tuition per semester, how much more the transportation cost every day?" he asked.

He said the students had no choice but to go to the street to pressure incumbent Mayor Calixto Cataquiz.

The San Pedro extension was founded in 2002 through a memorandum of agreement between the PUP main campus and then Mayor Felicisimo Vierneza.

The previous municipal councilors had also drafted a resolution, saying the municipality should yearly allocate P5 million to the university as a priority project of the town.

However, the MOA was not ratified and could not be carried out by the incumbent mayor, June Olivarez, a consultant of the municipality, told the students, teachers and parents in a dialogue.

Olivarez also reasoned out that the local government was experiencing a budget deficit, which, he said, was incurred by the previous administration.

But the students doubted the municipal government's claim.

"How could the previous term fund us in five years, and the present term couldn't?" Dalud said.

Olivarez assured the students that they could come back to school if the new MOA was settled.

Asked when that will happen, he said the students would know on Oct. 31 if the mayor approved or disapproved the new MOA.

"Give the mayor time to think," he quipped. *Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

No funds for salary hikes, Tacloban gov says

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE PROVINCIAL government cannot comply with a Malacañang order to increase the salaries of its 2,200 employees by 10 percent this year for lack of funds.

"The problem with our national government is that while it issues order for the increase of the salaries of employees in the local government units, it does not provide any funds for this purpose," Leyte Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 611 in June mandating a 10-percent increase in the compensation of all government personnel effective July 1, 2007.

Petilla said the province would need to raise P42 million to raise the salaries of its permanent and casual employees, but it could not do so.

Besides, he said, the provincial government had already approved its P800-million budget this year when EO 611 was approved.

He planned to ask the Department of Budget and Management to exempt Leyte from the wage increase this year. "But I can assure our employees that they will receive this mandated 10 percent increase early next year," he said.

In the proposed 2008 annual budget, funds for a 10-percent wage increase for Capitol employees are provided, Petilla disclosed.

An official of the Provincial Association of Government Employees (Page), who asked not to be identified, said that capitol workers were still hoping for a pay raise this year.

"While we understand the predicament of the governor, he has also to consider our present situation. Our income is no longer enough to meet our daily needs due to the spiraling prices of our commodities," she said.

The last time the employees received a salary adjustment was in 2001 or six years ago, the official said.

Provincial administrator Vincent Emnas said the employees could look forward to receiving their performance bonuses in December. The amount ranges from P500 to P2,000, depending on the work evaluation, he said.

The province had earlier allocated P4.5 million for the performance bonus.

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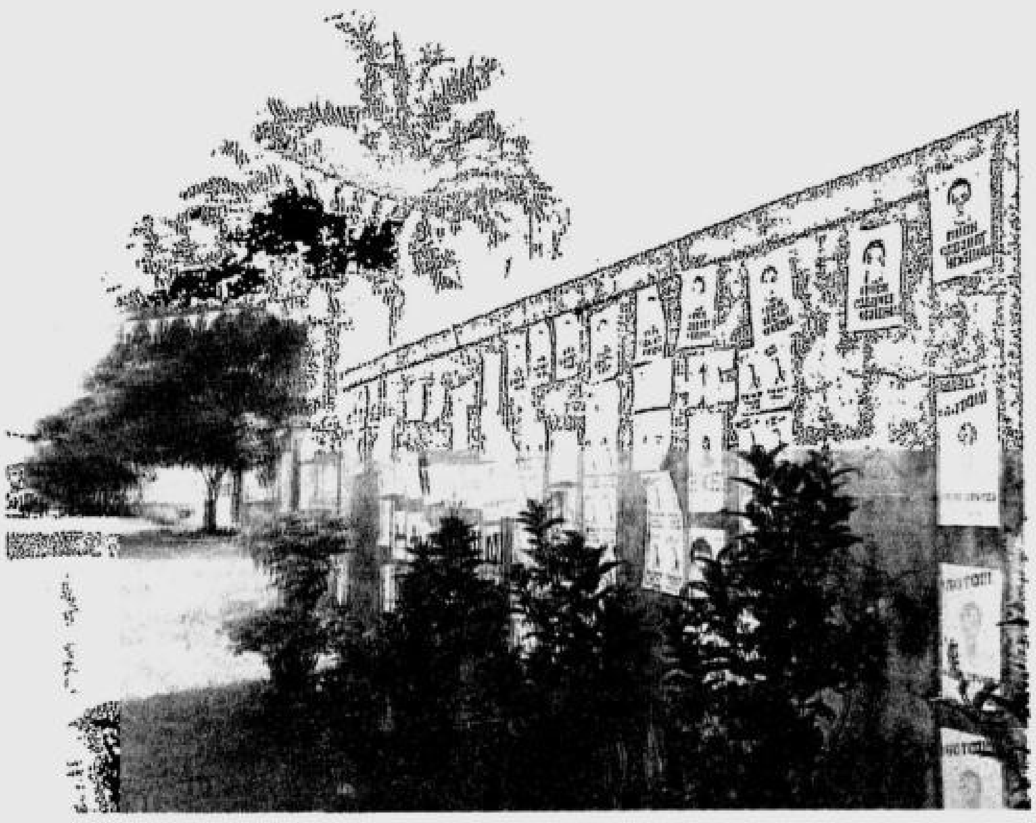

CAMPAIGNS IN CEMETERIES ROMULO O. PONTE/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

While cemeteries in San Pablo City are being prepared for the two-day celebration of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, candidates continue to post campaign paraphernalia even on walls of graveyards like this one.

Revoke pact with PPA, landowners ask gov

BATANGAS CITY—LANDOWNERS AND heirs of a 40-hectare property here have asked Gov. Vilma Santos–Recto to revoke a 2003 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the provincial government and the Philippine Ports Authority which allegedly deprived them of their ownership rights.

Teodulfo Tolentino, who represents 179 private landowners in Barangays Bolbok, Sta. Clara and Sta. Rita, said the group would be forced to "summon her again" to appear before the Ombudsman Public Assistance Bureau for not acting on the complaint it raised three months ago.

The memorandum proposed to develop the property into an economic zone for the Batangas Port Development Project Phase 3 (BPDP-Phase 3) within five years.

It was signed on July 12, 2003 by then Gov. Hermilando Mandanas and then PPA general manager Alfonso Cusi, and will expire next year.

Under the MOU, the province would acquire the land and shoulder cost of improvements for zone development, while the PPA would construct, develop and maintain Phase 3 of the port.

The agreement will automatically become ineffective if the provincial government "failed to develop the delineated area into an economic zone."

Tolentino said the document was executed without the landowners' knowledge. "For most of us, our property is our lifeline. Sadly, our lifeline and our dreams were being mercilessly trampled upon," he said in an Oct. 15 letter to Recto and the provincial board.

In a hearing in August, PPA port manager Alex Cruz said that under the MOU, the landowners should first seek permission from the provincial government before selling their property.

He noted that the land could not be used for purposes other than "port-related" since it was declared a port zone by then President Corazon Aquino.

Provincial administrator Victor Reyes said Recto was sticking to the plan of the previous provincial administrations to develop the area for port-related purposes.

Instead of pushing for its revocation, Reyes believed the landowners could wait for the MOU to expire in June next year.

In their letter, Tolentino said the landowners tried five times but failed to meet with the governor since July 30.

On Aug. 10, Recto's representative, provincial legal officer Joel Montealto, finally met with them and advised them that the province would have a decision "within two weeks."

Tolentino said he had not heard anything from Montealto or any representative from the province since then, forcing the group to request the Ombudsman for mediation and assistance.

The Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees or Republic Act No. 6713 states that all public officials and employees should respond to letters, telegrams or other means of communication sent by the public "within 15 working days from receipt thereof."

The law also indicates that the given reply should contain the action taken on the request.

On Sept. 17, Opab director Marlyn Torres-Galvez issued a notice to Recto, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and the PPA port manager requesting them to appear before the Oct. 1 mediation proceedings with the landowners.

Recto sent Montealto as her representative to the hearing. *Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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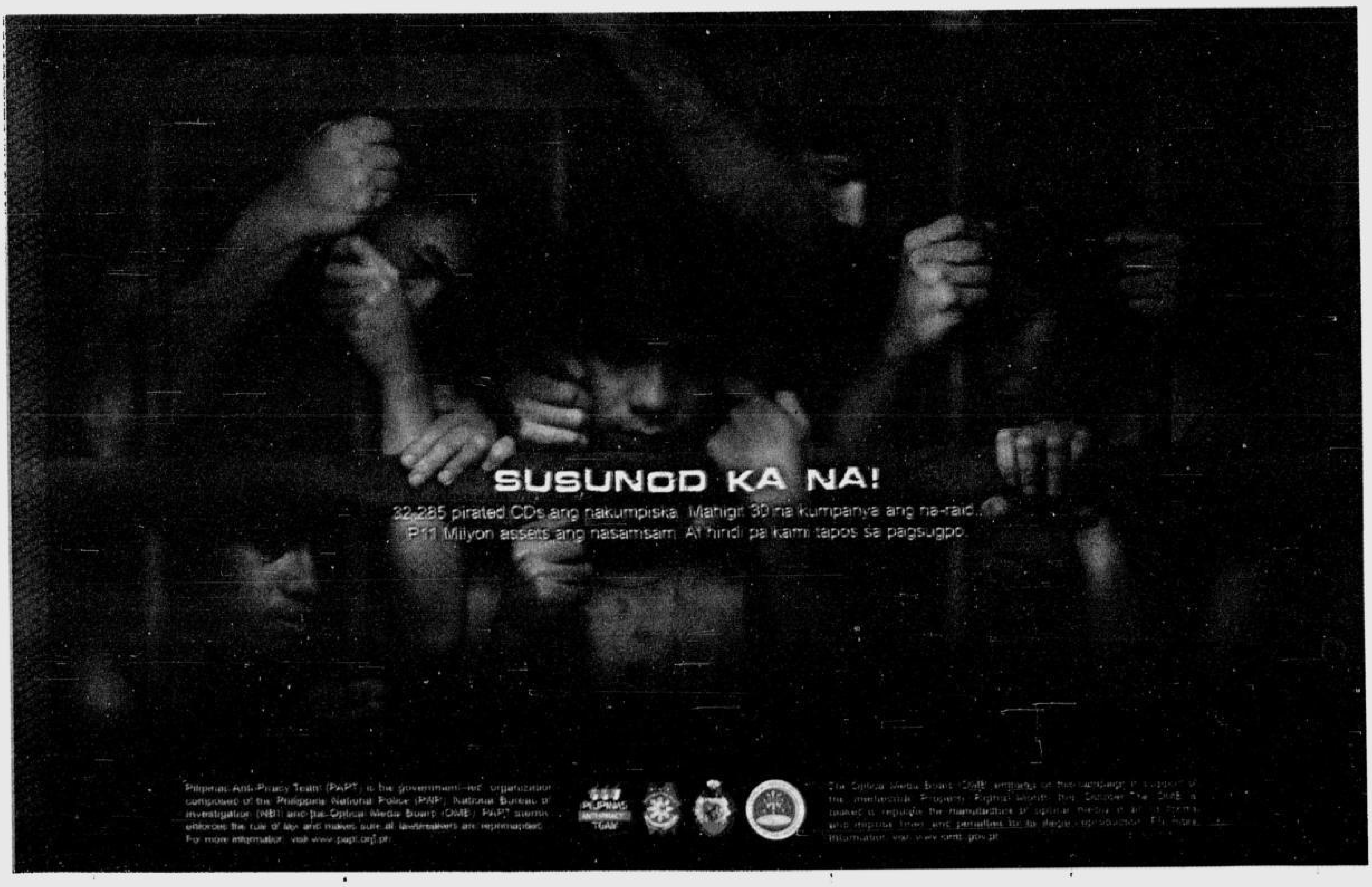

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5 dead in Catanduanes landslides; 3 missing

VIRAC, CATANDUANES—HEAVY rains induced by a low pressure area on Saturday caused flooding and numerous landslides, which killed five people in Baras town, disaster officials said yesterday.

Gov. Joseph C. Cua, Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) chair, said the towns hit by landslides include Baras, Bato, San Miguel, San Andres and Caramoran.

He identified the fatalities in Baras town, 24 kilometers from this capital town, as Nelson Tanael, 37; Michelle Tenoria, 27; Nicole Marvin Tanael, 4; and, Reinhard Tanael, 3, all from Barangay Bagong Sirang.

The other fatality was 10-year-old Carmela Olat of Barangay Osmeña.

The number and names of those injured were not yet available as of press time.

Cua added that three fishermen from Bato town had been reported missing.

The landslide-hit areas were the villages of Balongbong and Sibacungan in Bato; Boton, Pangilao, Buhi, and Siay in San Miguel; Lubas, Borocbosoc and Cabungahan in San Andres; Panabananon and Dariao in Caramoran; and Batolinao, Salvacion, Tilod, Paniquihan and Puraran in Baras.

The routes to the northern towns along the circumferential road as well as the Bato-Baras-Gigmoto national secondary road have been blocked by landslides, Cua said.

Lt. Henry Pabelonio, commander of Alpha Company of the Army's 65th Infantry Battalion, said a chopper was on its way to Catanduanes to deliver election paraphernalia and conduct a reconnaissance survey of the landslide-hit areas.

The heavy rains, which began past 10 a.m. on Saturday until after midnight Sunday, was induced by an active low pressure area that remained stationary at 40 kilometers north of Catanduanes as of Sunday morning.

Knee-deep water from overflowing canals flooded four areas in the capital town, hindering vehicular traffic and stranding scores of light vehicles, tricycles and motorcycles.

Cabugao Bay turned muddy brown as silt, earth and debris washed away from the mountains cascaded down the rivers and streams.

The Naval Southern Luzon Command immediately dispatched one patrol gunboat carrying relief goods to Catanduanes.

In Camarines Sur, the continuous downpour on Saturday evening caused flooding in 19 towns, including Baao, Bato, Nabua, Buhi, Bula, Pili, Bombon, Cabusao, Calabanga, Camaligan, Canaman, Gainza, Libmanan, Magarao, Milaor, Minalabac and San Fernando and the cities of Iriga and Naga, a report from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD)-Bicol said.

The OCD coordinated with the Coast Guard for deployment of rescue boats in Nabua, which was experiencing 5-foot floodwaters on Sunday that stranded scores of vehicles.

The Naval Southern Luzon Command sent five rescue teams on board M35 trucks and mini-cruiser with two rubber boats.

The report said Naga River reached its full bank capacity with 1.8 meters above normal rate while three villages in Naga City were also flooded.

In Albay, the flooded areas included the low-lying areas of Libon, Oas and Polangui towns and Ligao City.

As of 5 a.m. Sunday, the weather bureau reported an active low pressure area 40 km north of Catanduanes or 150 km east of Camarines Norte. *Fernan Gianan with a report from Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

ELECTION FIESTA

In the main highway of Digos City, Davao del Sur, campaign materials for today's village and youth elections are posted almost everywhere.

NEWSBRIEFS

Brownout hits Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—The power outage that hit most parts of Mindanao on Sunday afternoon was traced to a technical glitch that affected the Mindanao grid, according to Milfrance Capulong, communications officer of the National Transmission Corp.

Capulong said initial findings showed that the Abaga Agus Line 1 conductor flashover at the National Power Corp. plant in Iligan City melted, causing the power outage at around 1:04 p.m.

The power outage hit the cities of Cotabato, Davao, Kidapawan, General Santos, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Malaybalay, Digos, Tagum, Mati, Tacurong and Koronadal, and most provinces of Central Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, Northern Mindanao and the Caraga Region.

As of 5 p.m., power has been restored in most areas.

Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao

Village chief bet held

LEGAZPI CITY—A candidate for barangay captain was jailed Sunday after combined elements of the National Bureau of Investigation and police arrested him at Barangay Victory Village here for possession of a live grenade, packs of suspected shabu, and sample ballots with cash.

During a search operation, Joseph Vargas yielded a live grenade, 8 packs of suspected shabu, bundled money worth P150,000, and sample ballots enclosed with P100 to P200 each, added lawyer Tom Enrile, NBI Legazpi agent in charge. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Antimeasles drive in Kalinga

CITY OF TABUK—Health officials were targeting 31,000 children in its antimeasles drive in Kalinga.

Dr. Romulo Gaerlan, provincial health officer, said at least 1,000 children in the province have been given antimeasles vaccines since the campaign "Knockout Tigdas 2007" was launched last week.

The activity followed two mass immunization campaigns in 1998 and 2004. Gaerlan said children age nine months to four years would be given antimeasles vaccine until Nov. 15. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

3 nabbed in Davao for drugs

DAVAO CITY—The incidents of summary executions targeting suspected criminals here apparently failed to deter drug pushers from continuing with their trade. On Oct. 24, police arrested three suspected illegal drug pushers during separate occasions.

SPO3 Edgar Fernandez of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency said the first to fall was Glen Siega, 25, a resident of Sandawa Avenue, who yielded about .05 grams of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride during a buy-bust operation. At around 9:30 p.m. in Torril District, they arrested Edgardo Taguiema, 47, and Rene Boy Rosario, 31, who yielded sachets of suspected shabu worth about P10,000. *Dennis Jay Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*

Seized forest products rotting, says group

LUCENA CITY—AT LEAST 1,646 cubic meters or 697,535 board feet of seized logs and lumber have been rotting government impounding areas in Quezon province, according to an inventory by an environmentalist group.

The rotting logs are part of the more than 4,800 cu. m. (about 2 million board feet) of illegally cut forest products confiscated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in northern and central parts of Quezon from 2000 to Aug. 2007.

"The sight of a million pesos worth of forest products just left rotting is abominable. [These are] government resources gone wasted. The government should change the process of forfeiture and disposition of seized items to stop this absurdity," Jay Lim, program officer of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK)-Southern Tagalog, told the INQUIRER.

Lim also disclosed that during more than six years of anti-illegal logging operations, only nine persons had been hauled in jails but were later released after posting bail.

"This only shows the rampant illegal logging in Quezon and the government's inadequate response to combat the situation even in the apprehension of suspects," he said.

Lim noted that based on DENR data, several known suspects in illegal logging trade in Quezon province had been listed several times as alleged owners of seized items.

TK staff members conducted the inventory of confiscated forest products impounded in DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) compounds in Real and Pagbilao towns for about a week last month.

The TK based its inventory on their own records and data furnished by the DENR.

"We want to know the whole process and procedure to help in the improvement of the system if there's a need for it. And indeed, the process really needs some changes. We're just finishing our evaluation and we will submit our recommendations," said lawyer Sheila de Leon, TK-Southern Tagalog executive director.

De Leon said they focused their inventory in Real and Pagbilao Cenros because the two local DENR offices have jurisdiction over wide-forested areas.

The Cenro in Real covers Sierra Madre in north Quezon while Pagbilao covers the Atimonan National Park, Mt. Banahaw-San Cristobal and some parts of Sierra Madre.

Cenro-Pagbilao also covers the coastal town of Mauban, a known transshipment point of illegally cut lumber from Sierra Madre mountain ranges in northern Luzon.

Lim said even the seized vehicles used in the transport of illegally cut forest products and cutting equipment were left deteriorating in DENR impounding areas.

He observed that the stocks of confiscated flitches, logs and lumber in grassy areas inside the compound had become snake pits.

The TK inventory noted that the DENR in Real and Pagbilao had donated to local government units, schools, villages and nongovernment organizations a total of 1,897 cubic meters (803,903 board feet) of confiscated logs and lumber, mostly dipterocarp species like narra and lauan.

"But there were some loopholes in the donation process," Lim said. He did not elaborate.

Antonio Diwa, Cenro-Real chief, admitted the decay of confiscated forest products.

"But we're helpless on how to address the situation due to lack of much better impounding areas. Besides, we cannot touch the seized items until the court resolves the case," he said over the phone.

He also complained of lack of funds to speed up the hauling of confiscated forest products. De Leon said there was a need for "special courts" to speed up the resolution of cases involving environmental crimes.

She observed that a number of judges and prosecutors were still not well versed in environmental laws. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Transco employees angered by private auction of state firm

BAGUIO CITY—EMPLOYEES' unions of the state-owned National Transmission Corp. (Transco) accused the government of bad faith in concealing the lease terms of the national power grid that has been scheduled for auction on Nov. 5.

Walder Revelar, president for the Mt. Province area of the Mindanao Transco Employees Association (Mintrea), said they were protesting the government's "absence of transparency," after talks with the Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm) about granting unions a role in the auction collapsed on Thursday.

"They decided to hold a private auction and we are not to be involved in the transactions. We have reached out to the [power sector officials in government] because employees who may lose their jobs in this deal need some measure of control over their fate. This is much worse than our situation in Napocor (National Power Corp.)," Revelar said.

The firm's Mindanao-based union is led by retrenched or transferred employees of Napocor.

Revelar had negotiated for better terms on behalf of the North Luzon rank and file employees of Napocor when it began retrenching workers before its dissolution.

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira) requires full power industry deregulation by selling off all government-owned power plants, and by leasing out the operations of the country's power grid system.

Transco, a firm spun out of the deregulated Napocor, runs the national grid.

"But unlike my experience with Napocor, employees were no longer consulted regarding the Transco sale. Psalm agreed to meet with us but it turned out they never intended to discuss our terms," Revelar said on Thursday.

Mintrea and the Corporate Officers, Managers, and Executives of Transco (Comet) has issued an Oct. 26 manifesto detailing contract terms they wanted the government to study before it perfects a concessionaire contract for the firm that buys Transco.

"These terms are reasonable because they are not selling assets. Government is selling its skilled workers to the private sector," Revelar said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Annual climb to Mt. Apo formally opens

KIDAPAWAN CITY—THE CITY government on Thursday declared the formal opening of the annual climb to the country's highest peak.

Marife Pame, chief of the city's tourism investments promotions office, said dozens of climbers—including foreigners—have already registered for the "Octo trek" to Mt. Apo and were expected to scale the mountain during the summer.

The activity also aims to project the environment and tourism potentials of the areas surrounding Mt. Apo, home to the Philippine Eagle.

Pame said even with the volume of climbers who already registered, others could still join the trek by registering until Oct. 31.

"Let's explore Mt. Apo before we explore other tourist destinations in the country," Pame said.

The annual trek also aims to stir awareness among climbers about the importance of protecting Mt. Apo's environment.

Aside from its role as watershed, Mt. Apo also provides geothermal energy to many Mindanao areas.

About two years ago, the government decided to close the area because of garbage left by mountaineers.

The North Cotabato provincial government started a clean up drive in Mt. Apo, which yielded tons of garbage.

North Cotabato Gov. Jesus Sacdalan said they have reminded climbers against throwing their refuse everywhere.

Pame said all registered climbers have also undergone orientation and training on rules to ensure that their journey would not affect the environment.

Sacdalan said to ensure the safety of climbers, policemen and soldiers have also been deployed in strategic spots—including the trails leading to Lake Agco and Venado. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Late SPORTS

Beverage Masters bounce back; Realtors score

GAMES WEDNESDAY *(Cuneta Astrodome)*
4:50 p.m.—Red Bull vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Alaska vs Barangay Ginebra

By Musong R. Castillo

LORDY TUGADE SCORED 13 POINTS in the final 4:56 last night to key Magnolia's 89-78 victory over Coca-Cola last night in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup eliminations at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tugade's scoring burst helped the Beverage Masters shatter a 70-all tie and bounce back from a defeat to Purefoods to hike their record to 3-1.

Coca-Cola, after opening up with an 85-76 decision of Welcoat last Oct. 19, went down for the second straight night.

"As you could see, we're struggling," said coach Siot Tanquingcen. "We're still looking for ways to give everyone minutes."

Sta. Lucia held it together for a full game and finally won one, pipping Talk 'N Text, 97-87, in the second game.

The Realtors improved to 1-2 while Talk 'N Text dropped to 2-2.

The scores:

First Game

MAGNOLIA 89—Tugade 21, Seigle 12, E. Villanueva 11, Ildefonso 11, J. Villanueva 7, Racela 6, Hontiveros 6, Fonacier 5, Tenorio 3, Gonzales 3, Eman 2, Wilson 2.

COCA-COLA 78—Peek 16, Telan 13, Buenafe 11, Arigo 11, Tolomia 9, Calimag 7, Enrile 6, Rizada 4, Duremdes 1, Isip 0.

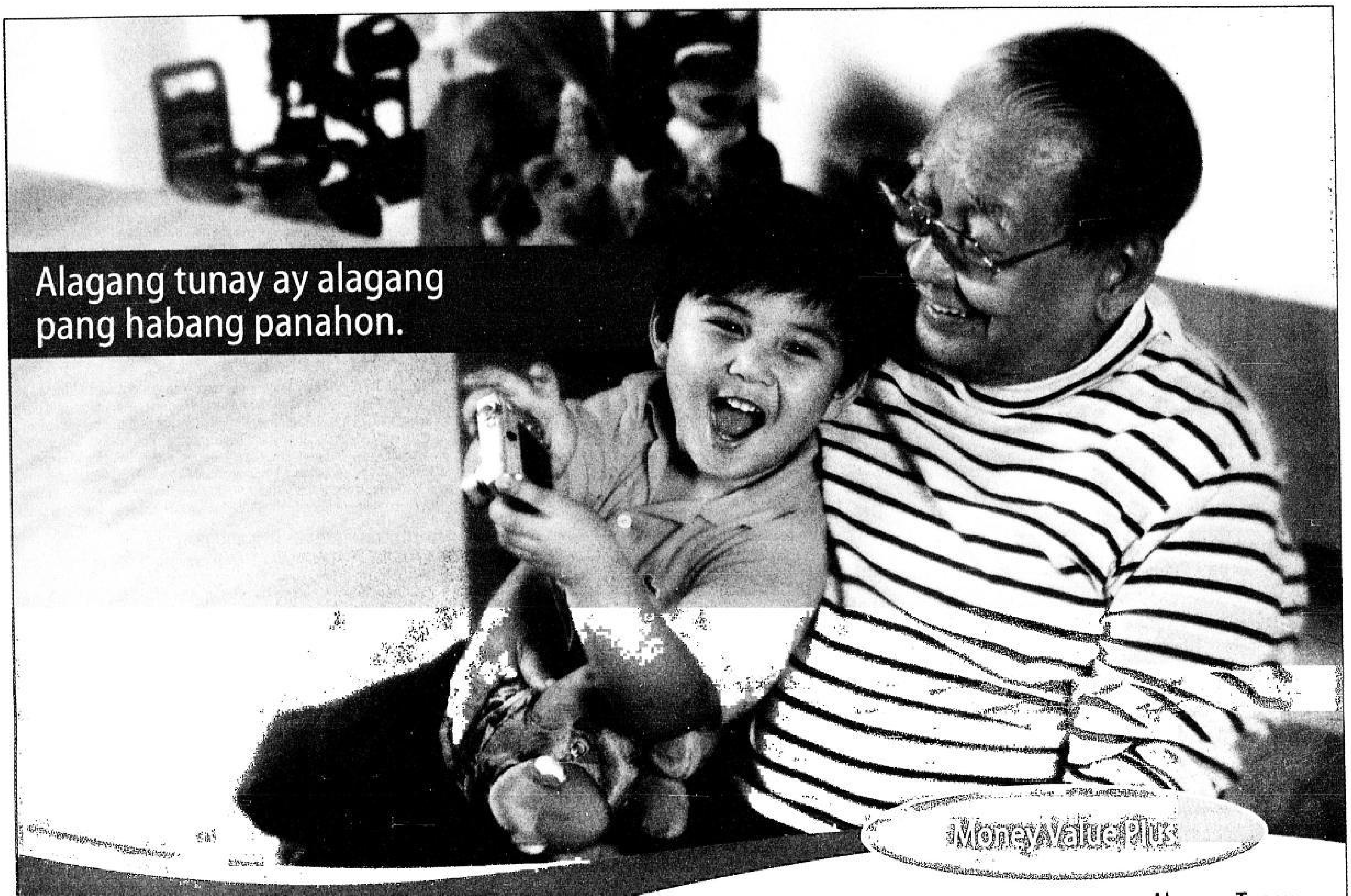
Quarters: 22-14, 38-44, 65-62, 89-78

Second Game

STA. LUCIA 97—Aquino 18, Mendoza 18, Williams 11, Omolon 10, Yeo 9, Daa 7, Reyes 6, Miranda 6, Espino 4, Mamaclay 3, Coronel 3, Gonzales 2.

TALK 'N TEXT 87—Alapag 24, Washington 19, Cardona 14, De Ocampo 12, Ritualo 5, Billones 4, Aljamal 3, Taulava 3, Belano 2, Allado 1, Carey 0.

Quarters: 33-16, 52-35, 70-56, 97-87



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Metro police to check voting centers

QC cops tighten watch on 'areas of concern'

By Allison W. Lopez, Kristine L. Alave and Kenneth M. del Rosario

METRO MANILA POLICE CHIEF GEARY BARIAS yesterday ordered his top officials to inspect some of the schools in their areas which would be used as voting centers for today's barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

The memorandum from the National Capital Region Police Office director was addressed to the heads of the five police districts in the metropolis.

In particular, Barias listed two schools in each police district which he ordered his men to inspect at 6 a.m. today.

Officials of the Manila Police District were tasked to inspect the P. Gomez Elementary School on P. Guevarra Street in Sta. Cruz and the Ramon Magsaysay High School on España, Sampaloc.

On the other hand, Southern Police District officials were ordered to check Fort Bonifacio Elementary School on J.P. Rizal Extension, Barangay West Rembo, Makati and the Signal Village High School in Signal Village, Taguig.

For the Quezon City Police District, their assignment was to inspect the Bagong Pag-Asa Elementary School on R-10, Barangay Bagong Pag-Asa and the Batasan Hill National High School on Batasan Road.

Northern Police District heads, meanwhile, were assigned to check the Caloocan City High School on 10th Avenue West, Caloocan City and the Gen. T. de Leon Elementary and High School in Valenzuela.

EPD assignment

Lastly, Eastern Police District officials were ordered to inspect the Andres Bonifacio Integrated School on Acacia Lane, Mandaluyong and the Nagpayong Elementary School on Caruncho Avenue Extension, Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig.

EPD chief, Senior Supt. Nilo de la Cruz, said he has ordered more police patrols over the weekend in preparation for today's synchronized elections.

While there were no election hotspots in his area, De la Cruz assured residents that the district police force has enough security for any emergency.

"EPD is well prepared. There are no hotspots in my area of responsibility. However, all precincts will have security in case of any contingency," he said.

In Rizal province, police director Senior Supt. Freddie Panen said that his men have been on red alert with checkpoints set up on major roads.

According to Panen, some villages in the towns of Rodriguez and Tanay, as well as communities in the mountainous area of Antipolo City, have been classified as areas of immediate concern.

He added that he conducted inspections in the province over the weekend to check his men's security preparations.

Taking a more proactive approach, the Quezon City police said they would be increasing their visibility in 11 barangays considered as "areas of concern" in today's polls.

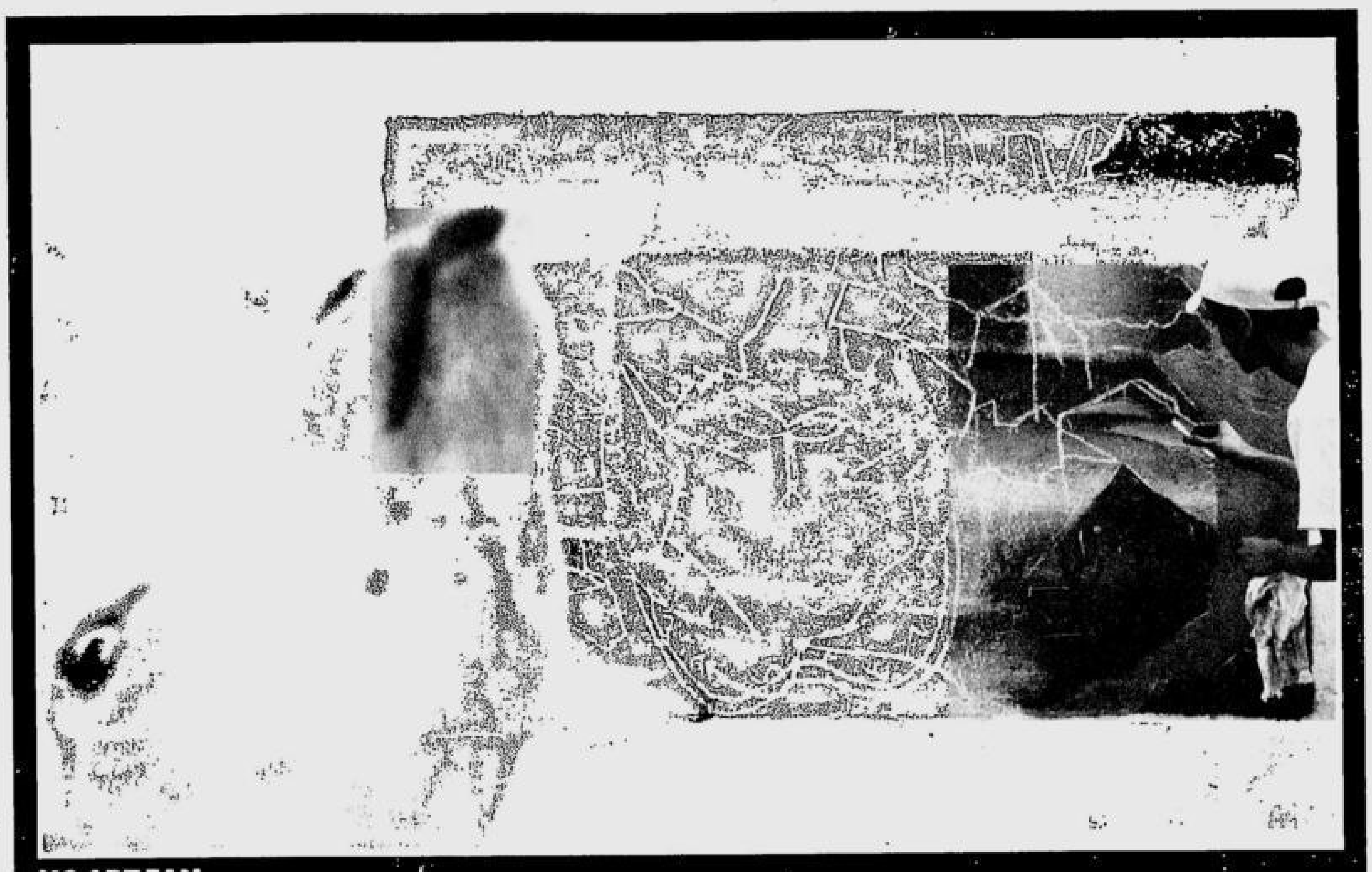
QC 'hotspots'

Considered "hotspots" are Barangays Siena, Bahay Toro, Talipapa, Pasong Tamo, Nagkaisang Nayon, North Fairview, Holy Spirit, Payatas, Batasan Hills, Commonwealth and Tatalon.

"We got all the precincts in the city's 142 barangays covered," said Supt. Bernabe Balba, intelligence chief of the Quezon City Police District. He reiterated, however, that they would be paying more attention to the areas of concern to prevent election-related violent incidents.

QCPD chief, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, told the INQUIRER that they would be fielding 730 policemen in polling places, with an additional 70 from Camp Crame.

"Our patrol cars would be ready to respond to any incident as they would be stationed in strategic locations," Gatdula said.



NO ART FAN
A participant in a mural painting contest at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa puts the finishing touches to his entry, taking no notice of a goat in the background which seems to disapprove of his work.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Protesting teachers to wear black shirts

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

NAVOTAS PUBLIC SCHOOL teachers who are serving in today's synchronized barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections will be wearing black T-shirts as a sign of protest following the filing of criminal charges against 13 of their colleagues by a defeated candidate in the May 14 elections.

On Oct. 23, former Malabon-Navotas Rep. Federico "Ricky" Sandoval filed charges of dereliction of duty against the teachers at the city prosecutor's office. In particular, he accused them of conspiring to keep his poll watchers out of voting precincts.

Sandoval ran for Navotas mayor but lost to Toby Tiangco, the incumbent.

Esperanza Tecson, president of the Association of Public Elementary School Teachers (PEST), said the charges filed against the teachers were "unfair" as they were just doing their job.

Among those charged were Yulanda Felizardo of the Navotas Elementary School, Susan Mabalot and De de la Cruz of the Kapitbahayan School, Amada Laurel, Bernarda Aguilar, Cecilia de Castro and Marites Alejandro of the Bangkulasi Elementary School.

Also charged were Mercedita Lauriano, Cleoffe Enriquez and Marites Tesare of the San Roque Elementary School and Teodora Ariesgado and Marivic Capuli of the Dagatdagatan Elementary School.

DID YOU KNOW

CARTOONIST Antonio Velasquez was born on Oct. 29, 1910 in Paco, Manila. Considered as the Father of Philippine Comics, Velasquez created Kengkoy, which first came out on Jan. 11, 1929 in Liwayway magazine. He received the Best Komiks of the Year award from the Graphic Arts Service Inc. in 1963; a Special Award from the Citizens Council for Mass Media in 1971; the Gawad CCP para sa Sining from the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1993; and the Life Achievement Award from Komiks Operation Brotherhood in 1998. (Source: CCP Encyclopedia)
Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

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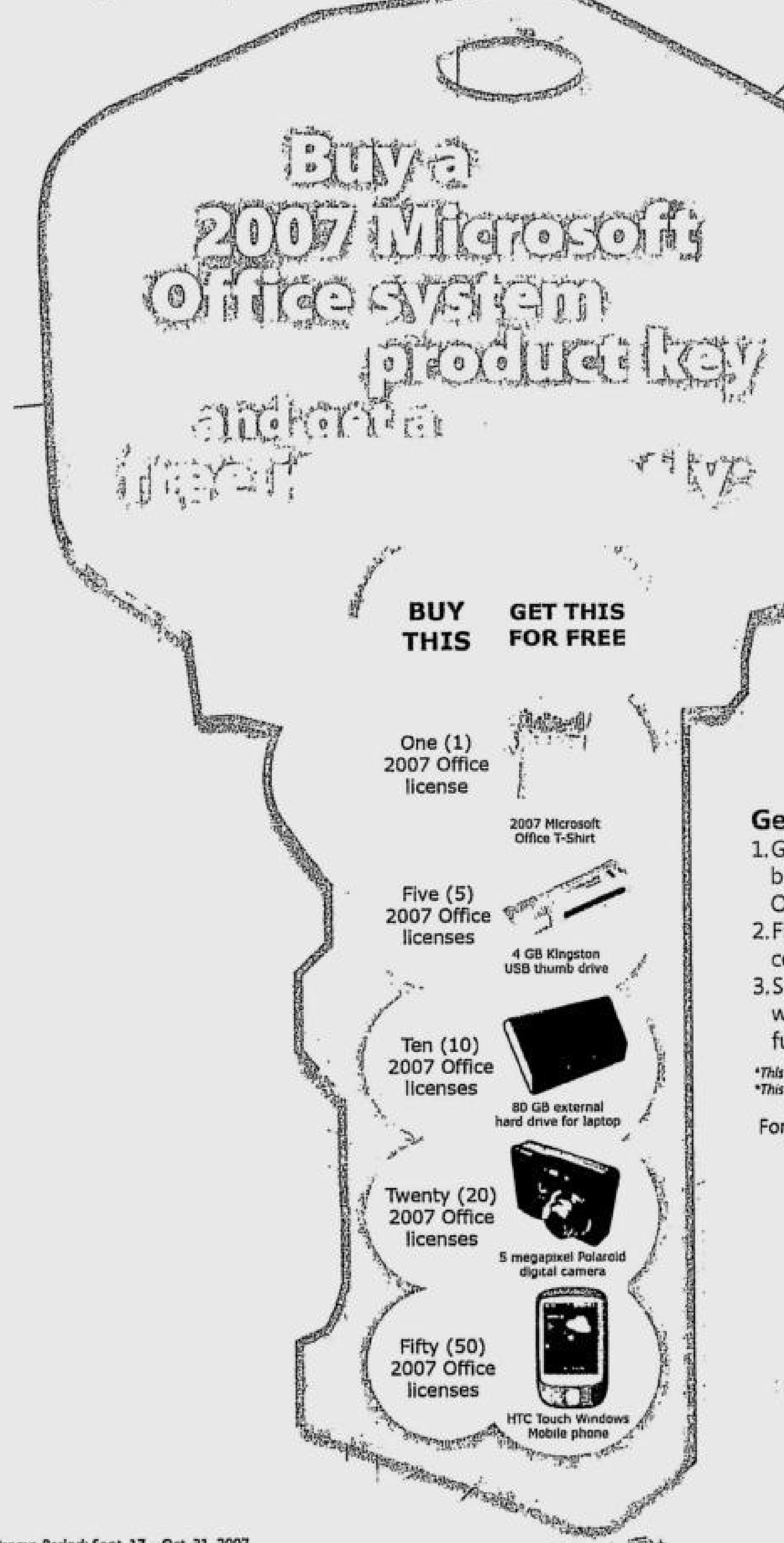
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MMDA cracks down on road 'distractions'

By DJ Yap

POSTERS, STREAMERS AND other advertising materials on road right-of-ways in Metro Manila were ordered removed yesterday by Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

Fernando said the sidewalk clearing operations were meant to minimize distractions in the streets as motorists began their yearly exodus to their home provinces for All Saints' Day.

He said advertising posters featuring celebrities and models had been known to distract motorists traveling on major roads like Edsa, sometimes leading to accidents—a claim disputed by advertising firms and which had led to some court entanglements.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the agency was not singling out any advertising firm, pointing out that even banners put up by politicians to express support for the administration were being torn down.

Fernando said there was "public clamor" for the MMDA to extend its sidewalk clearing operations even to secondary roads to help ease traffic flow and to maintain peace in the community.

"In the past, our sidewalk clearing operation was limited to the major thoroughfares but the agency will now undertake the same duties even in inner streets," he said.

He added that the agency hopes to clear all Metro Manila roads by 2008 as part of the "Metro Gwapo" project of the Arroyo administration.

"Let me stress that the removal of illegal posters, banners and advertising displays are included," Fernando said.

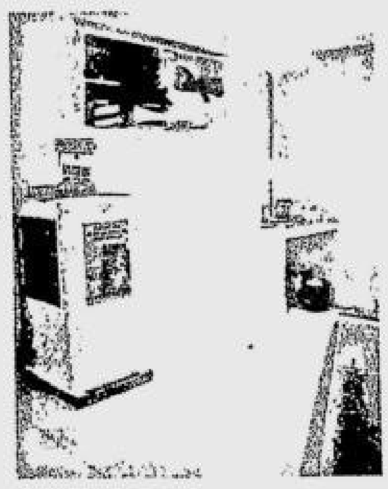
Group opens spay/neuter clinic for strays

By Marlet D. Salazar

A POPULATION BOOM AMONG stray or feral cats and dogs has become one of the biggest problems faced by local governments and animal welfare groups.

To solve the problem, these groups have suggested that strays be spayed or neutered to prevent them from producing "unwanted offspring."

Among the organizations that have been advocating this cause is the Compassion and Responsibility for Animals (Cara) Philippines which has been aggressively promoting the Trap-Neuter-Release Campaign since its formation in 2000.



THE CLINIC charges from P350 to P500 for its services.

CARA volunteers celebrate the opening of the Spay/Neuter Clinic in Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City.

PHOTOS BY MARLET SALAZAR

CARA SPAY/NEUTER CLINIC BLESSING
FERAL CAT DAY
SUPPORT CARA
SUPPORT CARA

Spaying and neutering are safe procedures for removing the reproductive organs of dogs and cats, according to Cara. Animals who are operated on become healthier and less vulnerable to diseases contrary to the belief that they would become lazy and fat.

Under the program, stray cats and dogs are rounded up, neutered or spayed before they are released.

Just recently, Cara opened a spay/neuter (S/N) clinic in Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City.

Yasmin Jadwani, Cara vice president, said that the clinic, which is solely for spaying and castrating stray animals, "is a wish come true."

"The immensity of the problem of overpopulation resulting in homeless animals prompted us to speed up things," Jadwani said.

The new clinic on Orense Street is being "leased for free" for two years by Claudia Tambunting, whose family owns Carson Holdings and Development Corp.

Tambunting is a friend of Cara president Nancy Cu Unjieng who said that the group has attended to many strays that Claudia rescued.

The operations are performed by veterinarians who volunteer their services.

"We actually have a number of animals for spay/neuter every week," said Albie Sia, media coordinator of Cara.

She added: "We are also afraid to see the day when vets will refuse doing S/N because it has become a chore rather than a sympathetic gesture."

Jadwani said the Cara S/N Clinic is also intended for low income families who cannot afford the service. The vets charge P350 for spaying and P500 for castration.

According to her, it is important that the animals have families to go home to after surgery because they don't have a recovery room in the clinic.

The recuperation period for female animals is 10 days and about three to five days for males.

"Perhaps we can accommodate homeless animals, but only for a minimum number of days," she said.

The clinic also has to set a limit on the number of animals it can attend to because of its limited financing and manpower. At present, Cara wants to hire a veterinarian to perform the surgeries.

Sia quickly pointed out that they are not competing with other animal clinics. "Cara clinic is mainly an alternative low cost spay facility for those who are burdened with too many animals under their care," she added.

Cara's thrust is basically animal birth control and education (ABC&E). Since it started, the group has been into the Trap-Neuter-Return campaign. The volunteers care for the animals until they have fully recovered.

Lim wants condemned buildings demolished immediately

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim has ordered the demolition of condemned buildings in the city.

"For the sake of public safety, these condemned buildings must go," Lim said the other day.

He cited City Council Resolution No. 74 which calls for the immediate demolition of all condemned buildings and infrastructures in Manila, citing safety and aesthetic considerations.

Lim, in particular, ordered city officials to give building owners a minimum of 15 days to one month to comply with the resolution before the city government takes over the demolition job.

According to building official Melvin Balagot, Manila has 35 condemned structures, mostly in Sta. Cruz, Sampaloc, Tondo, Quiapo, Malate, San Nicolas and Sta. Mesa, whose owners had been served demolition notices.

Vice Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, city council presiding officer, said the condemned buildings and infrastructures pose a danger to the public as they could collapse anytime and injure or kill bystanders and pedestrians, or cause damage to property.

METROBRIEFS

Woman loses P1.5M

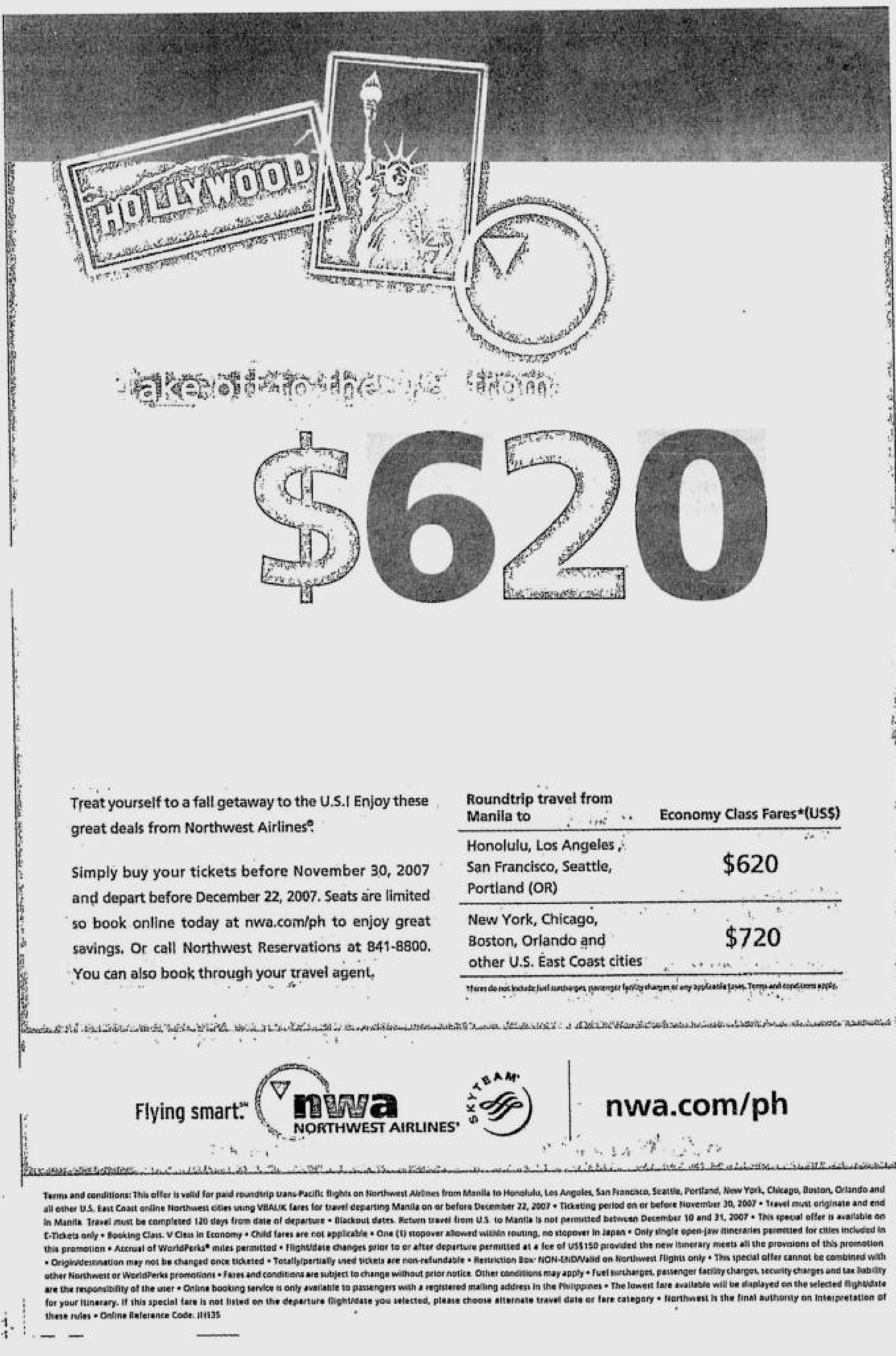
A JEWELER lost P1.5 million worth of cash and jewelry to unidentified robbers who broke into her house in Quezon City while she was on vacation. Rowena Naito, 39, said she came home Saturday night to find that the locks to her house in Sacred Heart Village, Barangay Putik had been destroyed. A check of her belongings showed that the valuables which she kept in her bedroom were missing. These included two diamond rings, a diamond necklace, a necklace with a diamond pendant, a diamond bracelet and a pair of pearl earrings. Also taken by the robbers were P25,000 in cash.

Kenneth M. del Rosario

Local execs face raps

MANILA Mayor Alfredo Lim yesterday warned against the election of unscrupulous candidates in today's barangay polls after the arrest of two barangay councilors from Pasay City who pretended to be Manila city government employees. In a directive to Senior Supt. Alex Gutierrez, chief of the Manila City Hall Police Office, Lim ordered the filing of graft charges against *kagawads* Carlos Castro, 48, and Eva Roda, 46. The complaints against the two were filed by Emily Sabang of the Al-Janilel International Manpower Services and Marita Frontera of the Al-Khaleej International Service. The victims said the two asked them for money in exchange for facilitating the processing of their companies' business requirements. The suspects claimed to be employees of the Manila City Hall business promotion and development office.

Allison W. Lopez



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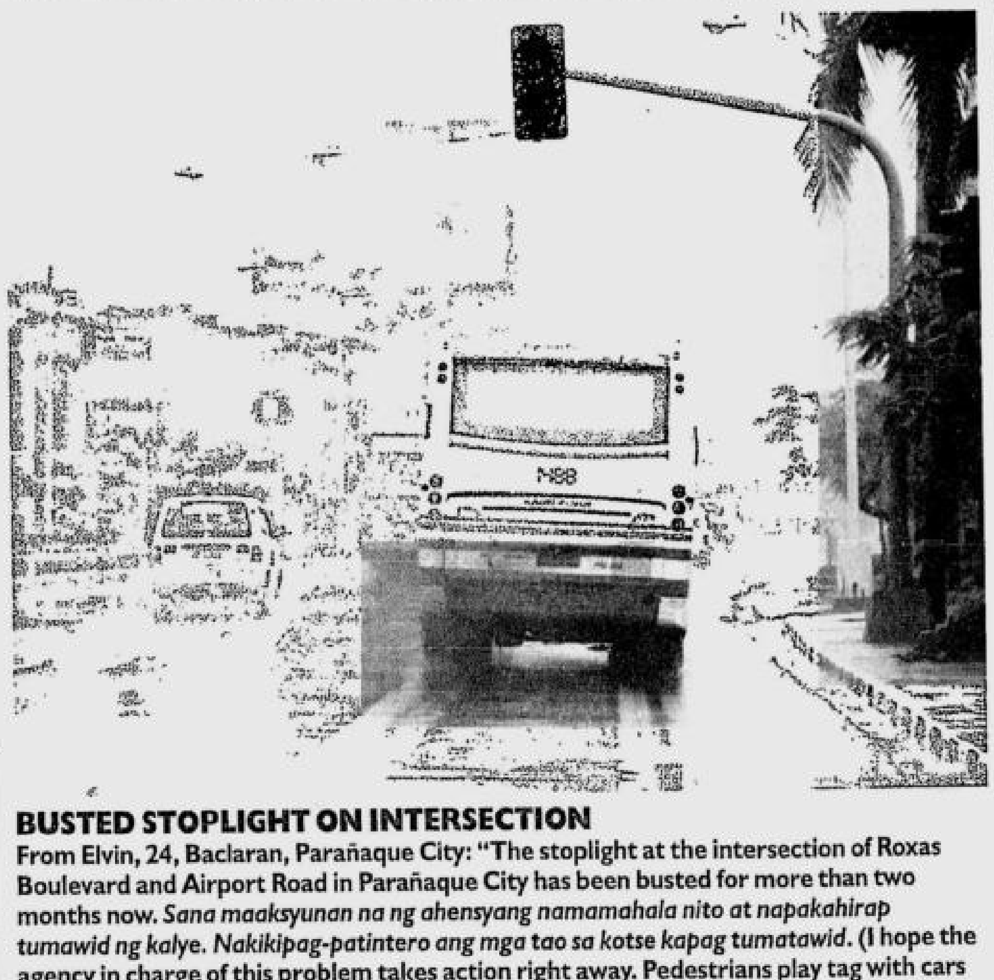

BUSTED STOPLIGHT ON INTERSECTION

From Elvin, 24, Baclaran, Parañaque City: "The stoplight at the intersection of Roxas Boulevard and Airport Road in Parañaque City has been busted for more than two months now. *Sana maaksyunan na ng ahensyang namamahala nito at napakahirap tumawid ng kalye. Nakikipag-patintero ang mga tao sa kotse kapag tumatawid.* (I hope the agency in charge of this problem takes action right away. Pedestrians play tag with cars each time they cross the street)."

JESS YUSON

METRO Citizen's call

0918-8985566

Who will be next victim?

I WAS attacked by a mentally ill man recently while walking from my office on E. Rodriguez Avenue near St. Luke's hospital. I was hospitalized for three days because of a fractured nasal bone and I was unable to work for more than a week. The man who attacked me has not been arrested by the police and is now again out in the streets waiting for another victim. My HMO card did not even cover my hospital bill so where's justice for me?

LUZVIMINDA ONG, 49, Malabon City

Noisy teeners, loud music at Tatalon, Quezon City

KINDLY help us bring to the attention of the authorities concerned the presence of a group of teenagers hanging around in our area who make too much noise with their loud music and excessive chatting at the top of their voices up to the wee hours in the morning, thus disturbing our sleep. Thank you.

EVANGELINE GARVIDA, 35, Manunggal Street, Tatalon, Quezon City

No respite from cagers in Makati basketball court

THIS basketball court on Maya Street in Barangay Rizal, Makati City, near a big unfinished building is the bane of residents in the area. We are bothered by the incessant shouting of players who dribble all night until dawn. There have also been several incidents where passersby are hit by the ball. Who can help us with this problem? Also, when will the construction work on the unfinished building be over?

REY, 30, Makati City

A job for BFAD?

WE ARE wondering if companies which sell sandwich bags and freezer bags made in China, as clearly seen in the label, were given a stamp of approval by the Bureau of Food and Drugs. With a lot of items from China now under scrutiny, maybe someone should look into this since it is a food safety issue. Thanks.

L. CASTANEDA, 50, Makati City

Drought in 3 US states fuels battle over water

CUMMING, GEORGIA—AN EXTREME drought in the southeastern United States has fueled a bitter tri-state battle over dwindling water resources that pits man against mussels.

Millions of people in the state of Georgia fear their taps could run dry, while environmentalists in Florida say freshwater mollusks protected under the US Endangered Species Act risk dying off.

Hoping to guarantee no one will go thirsty, Georgia authorities want to drastically reduce the outflow from a reservoir that supplies drinking water to three million people. But neighboring Alabama claims that would have devastating economic effects on its population, while Florida says a reduced flow would threaten fragile ecosystems.

"You'd think people would come before mussels," said Bob Leamy, 55, walking on caked mud that was once under Lake Lanier's waters.

The man-made lake is at the frontline of the battle of words. It supplies drinking water for more than three million people in the city of Atlanta, feeds the Chattahoochee river that runs along the border with Alabama and flows into Florida's Apalachicola river.

Because of the drought, the 38,000-acre reservoir is almost five meters below average levels, and officials say the water will continue to dwindle.

Georgia has filed a legal motion seeking to force the US Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the reservoir, to limit the release of water. Alabama and Florida both oppose the motion.

"The State of Georgia is suffering a drought of historic proportions and is facing potentially dire and irreparable consequences if the United States Army Corps of Engineers does not immediately stop depleting the reservoir storage," Georgia state governor said at a recent news conference on the banks of the receding lake.

Perdue asked US President George W. Bush to temporarily exempt Georgia from the Endangered Species Act, under which outflow from the reservoir is linked to the survival needs of the purple bankclimber and fat three-ridge mussels in the Apalachicola River.

The governors of Alabama and Florida have asked the president to reject Perdue's request.

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley warned the measure sought by Georgia would "have dire consequences on people and their livelihoods downstream in Alabama" and could lead to the shut-down of a nuclear power plant and industries along the Chattahoochee River. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Researchers aim to use mosquitos to fight malaria

ROCKVILLE, Maryland—A US scientist is leading an international team of researchers using an army of blood-sucking mosquitos to produce a potentially potent vaccine against malaria. Stephen Hoffman, 58, founded Sanaria Inc., a biotech firm solely dedicated to the production of a vaccine against malaria, a mosquito-borne disease that kills one million people a year, many of them African children. At his lab, researchers feed mosquitos capable of transmitting malaria to humans with blood contaminated with Plasmodium falciparum. Two weeks later, the parasites spread into the mosquitos' intestines and then to their salivary gland. The mosquitos are then delicately taken to a new chamber where they are briefly treated with radiation to weaken the parasites. Researchers extract the weakened parasites and purify them. Used in the vaccine, the weakened parasites trigger an immune reaction powerful enough to protect against malaria more than 90 percent of the time for at least 10 months, Hoffman said. Those results were based on a trial conducted among 16 adults, he said.

AFP

Taiwan to become No. 2 microchip maker

TAIPEI—Taiwan will overtake the United States to become the world's second-biggest microchip supplier this year, the state Central News Agency reported Sunday. Taiwan will account for 18 percent of global semiconductors, behind Japan with 24 percent, the agency said, citing a report by the official Industrial Technology Research Institute. The sector has been boosted by the continuing expansion of plants producing 12-inch (300-mm) wafers in Taiwan, said institute analyst Peng Kuo-chu. In the three months to December, Taiwan's semiconductor makers are forecast to churn out 595,000 12-inch wafers, 16 percent more than a year ago, he said. The United States and South Korea are expected to tie at third with a 17 percent share.

AFP

No women elected in Omani vote

OMANI voter REUTERS

MUSCAT—Oman's 84-member advisory Shura Council will have no women members after 21 female candidates failed to win seats in Saturday's election. The outgoing fifth Shura Council, elected in 2003, had two women members. The Gulf Arab state has been ruled since 1970 by Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who appoints the Cabinet. Saturday's vote was preceded by a public election campaign, a first for Oman, where most people still vote along tribal lines rather than on the policies of the candidates.

Reuters

For sale on eBay: Pol Pot's Benz

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Car collectors with macabre tastes and at least 35,000 British pounds ($71,800) to spare now have a chance to own a limousine reportedly used by Pol Pot, the late chief of Cambodia's notorious Khmer Rouge. "For sale—one classic 1973 Mercedes Benz stretch limousine ... previously used by one infamous owner Pol Pot, who led the Khmer Rouge during its genocidal regime in Cambodia from 1975-1979," reads a listing on the online auction site eBay.

AP

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Thousands of antiwar protesters march through the streets of Chicago, en route to a rally at Chicago's Federal Plaza Oct. 27. REUTERS

Gadhafi says Darfur talks doomed to failure

SIRTE, LIBYA—LIBYAN LEADER Moumar Gadhafi on Saturday said peace talks to end violence in Darfur were doomed to failure because of the absence of the main rebel groups in the conflict.

Despite the declaration of a ceasefire by the Sudanese government, the region's key rebel groups have boycotted the United Nations and African Union-sponsored talks.

Addressing the opening of the conference hosted by the Libyan leader in the Mediterranean resort of Sirte, Gadhafi said the absent Sudan Liberation Movement/Army and the Justice and Equality movement were "fundamental" to peace in Darfur.

"I consider their leaders to be my sons, even if they are disobedient, but without them we cannot make peace."

"I see that this conference must stop here," he said, before launching a broadside against the talks' sponsors, saying the UN and AU were not competent bodies to resolve "a tribal conflict."

"Foreign intervention" in such a domestic conflict "only makes things worse," he said, before suggesting that the 25-nation community of Sahel-Saharan States which he presides over was a better bet to forge peace in Darfur.

A UN diplomat played down the impact of Gadhafi's speech, saying on condition of anonymity the declaration of a ceasefire by Sudan's government that followed the Libyan leader's speech, was a much more significant development.

"We commit ourselves to respecting this unilateral ceasefire," said Nafie Ali Nafie, a top aide to President Omar al-Beshir who called on the international community to impose sanctions on those who failed to comply with the ceasefire.

The conference opened with a warning from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that rebel leaders who stayed away from the talks had much to lose.

"I am disappointed that some movement leaders have chosen to stay away from Sirte today. To them, I wish to say that the door remains open, but that if they continue to stay away, there is much they stand to lose," said a message from Ban delivered by UN Special Envoy Jan Eliasson. *AFP*

Cancellations as Air France strike enters 4th day

PARIS—A STRIKE BY AIR France flight attendants left frustrated passengers facing delays and cancellations for a fourth day Sunday, with long-haul flights among the hardest hit.

At Paris' main Charles de Gaulle airport, passengers crowded around check-in counters hoping that their flights would be called.

At one airport terminal, 16 out of 40 flights were cancelled, including long-haul flights to Johannesburg, Rio de Janeiro and Bangalore. At another terminal, nine out of 28 flights were grounded.

Air France had estimated that 60 percent of its flights would take off on Sunday, with the figure rising to 70 percent on Monday.

The strike is planned to continue until at least midnight (2300 GMT) on Monday.

Unions representing flight attendants launched the strike on Thursday to demand better pay and conditions. It has been followed by more than three quarters of staff.

Air France said Friday it had taken legal action against three unions seeking a total of 45 million euros ($65 million) in compensation for their losses. It has accused them of having failed to negotiate in the run-up to the strike. *AFP*

As wraps come off in car shows, 'auto spies' go undercover

CHIBA, JAPAN—JAPANESE AUtomakers were aiming for maximum publicity as the covers came off their sleek new cars at the Tokyo Motor Show this week, accompanied by popping champagne corks and glamorous models.

But some cars were drawing slightly too much attention for automakers' comfort as the more serious business of spying on rivals' vehicles got underway discreetly, along with efforts to protect products from enemy eyes.

Many foreign automakers and parts suppliers are eager to get every detail of the industry leaders' new vehicles, which they hope to use for their own products, according to motor industry experts.

Although no Chinese automakers and parts suppliers had stands at the motor show, many are believed to have sent people to the event to take notes and pictures of the latest designs, along with others from elsewhere in Asia, they said.

"It's a common practice," Credit Suisse Securities auto analyst Koji Endo said.

And it works both ways.

"Japanese automakers are also doing that in Frankfurt or in America," he said.

Auto industry people admit that it is exactly what Japanese automakers were doing in the 1960s.

"Now the Chinese makers have alliances with key global automakers so they are obtaining some knowledge and intelligence to manufacture vehicles," said Hirofumi Yokoi, an auto analyst with CSM Worldwide.

"If the time comes, it may be very challenging for Japanese automakers, especially in the mini-car segment. But it will not happen in the very foreseeable future," he said. *AFP*

JAPAN'S Mazda displays its next generation concept sports car "Taki." AFP

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Turkey threatens incursion into Iraq

IRAQI Kurd children play on old tanks of executed Saddam Hussein's army, Oct. 27 in Toran, 120 km north of the Kurdish city of Arbil. AFP

SIRNAK, TURKEY—TURKISH PRIME MINISTER Tayyip Erdogan threatened on Saturday to order an incursion into northern Iraq against Kurdish guerrillas after the failure of talks with Iraq aimed at averting a cross-border raid.

"The moment an operation is needed, we will take that step," Erdogan told a large flag-waving crowd in Izmit. "We don't need to ask anyone's permission."

The talks collapsed late on Friday after Ankara rejected proposals by Iraqi Defense Minister Gen. Abdel Qader Jassim for tackling guerrillas based in northern Iraq as insufficient and because they would not yield results quickly enough.

Turkey has massed up to 100,000 troops, backed by fighter jets, helicopter gunships, tanks, and mortars, on the border for a possible offensive against about 3,000 rebels using Iraq as a base from which to carry out attacks in Turkey.

The United States, which was also represented at the talks, opposes a major incursion, fearing it could destabilize the relatively peaceful north of Iraq and the wider region.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) launched its separatist campaign in 1984, since when more than 30,000 people have died.

Erdogan took a swipe at western countries for not cracking down on the PKK and said calling it a terrorist group, as the United States and European Union do, was not enough.

"We want action, and if you can't show action, you fail the sincerity test," he said. "Those who overlook terrorism are in cooperation with terrorism," he told a conference earlier.

Army sources said on Saturday that military planes were making reconnaissance flights along the mountainous border to photograph PKK camps in northern Iraq. Helicopters were patrolling villages and soldiers sweeping roads for mines.

Erdogan played down comments by Turkey's Armed Forces chief Gen. Yasar Buyukanit that the Turkish Army, Nato's second largest, was waiting for him to meet US President George W. Bush in Washington on Nov. 5 before a major incursion.

US-Turkish ties have deteriorated sharply in recent weeks.

Senior Turkish diplomats say Erdogan has given Washington and Baghdad a limited time to show concrete results or steps to be taken against the PKK. *Reuters*

Warming revives flora, fauna in Greenland

By Sarah Lyall

NARSARSUAQ, GREENLAND—A strange thing is happening at the edge of Poul Bjerge's tiny forest here.

Its four oldest trees—the four oldest pine trees in Greenland, named Rosenvinge's trees after the Dutch botanist who planted them in an experiment in 1893—are waking up. After lapsing into stately, sleepy old age, they are exhibiting new sprinklings of green at their tops.

"The old ones, they're having a second youth," said Bjerge, 78, who has watched the forest, called Qanasiassat, come to life, in fits and starts, since planting most of the trees in it 50 years ago. He beamed like a proud grandson. "They're growing again."

Although Greenland is the size of Europe, it has only nine conifer forests like Bjerge's, all of them cultivated. It has only 51 farms. Except for potatoes, the only vegetables most Greenlanders ever eat—to the extent that they eat vegetables at all—are imported, mostly from Denmark.

But now that the climate is warming, it is not just old trees that are growing. A Greenlandic supermarket is stocking locally grown cauliflower, broccoli and cabbage this year for the first time. Eight sheep farmers are growing potatoes commercially. Five more are experimenting with vegetables. And Kenneth Hoeg, the region's chief agriculture adviser, says he does not see why southern Greenland cannot eventually be full of vegetable farms and viable forests.

"If it gets warmer, a large part of southern Greenland could be like this," Hoeg said. Two and a half acres near here, imported pines, spruces, larches and firs are plunked in the midst of the scrubby, rocky hillside next to the fjord, as startling as a mirage.

"If it gets a little warmer, you could talk about a productive forest with enough wood for logs," Hoeg said.

Farther north, Greenland's great ice sheet is melting. But here in the subarctic south, the changes are more subtle and carry more promise.

"The limiting factor for human survival here is temperature, and there's a lot of benefits with a warmer climate," Hoeg said.

"We are on the frontier of agriculture, and even a few degrees can make a difference." *NYT*

New York governor tries new tack on illegal immigrants' driver licenses

IN A MAJOR SHIFT, GOV. ELIOT Spitzer of New York is backing off his plan to allow illegal immigrants to obtain the same kind of driver licenses as other New Yorkers, after weeks of anger over the proposal.

Instead, the governor said Saturday, the state would issue different classes of licenses: One license would also be a federally recognized identification card obtainable only by those who can prove they are legal residents of the United States and a second would not require proof of legal residency. A third would comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, which will tighten identification requirements.

The federal card, which is part of Real ID, a program to develop a highly secure form of identification that would be phased in nationwide by 2013, would allow a person to board airplanes, or enter the United States, without carrying a passport. The more-limited identification, which illegal immigrants would be eligible for, would not qualify as federal identification and would clearly say so.

The move to create different tiers of driver licenses followed a wave of criticism over the governor's proposal at a time when the issue of illegal immigration is stirring the national political debate, and many Democrats warned that Spitzer had put the party in political peril.

The new plan will probably do little if anything to quell the controversy over the issue, as people on both sides of the debate in New York expressed concern over it.

Under the plan, worked out in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, New York is likely to become one of the first states to offer the new federal license; it intends to start as soon as the middle of next year. *NYT*

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Victory double by Frankie, Juvic

Miñoza ends Japan drought; Pagunsan breaks through in Asian Tour

By Inquirer Sports

FRANKIE MIÑOZA ENDED A SIX-year victory drought in the rich Japan Tour and Juvic Pagunsan capped a great weekend for Philippine golf by coming up with a spectacular Asian Tour breakthrough win in Indonesia yesterday.

The 47-year-old Miñoza won Y24,000,000 (about $210,308) by nipping Korean Lee Dong-hwa with a birdie on the first hole of a sudden death playoff for the ABC Championship in Hyogo prefecture after both players finished tied at 14-under 274.

It was the first championship in Japan for Miñoza, who won this year's Philippine Open for the second time last February, since ruling the Fujisankei Classic in 2001.

Pagunsan, 29, and last year's Asian Tour Rookie of the Year, finished birdie-eagle to complete a seven-under-par 65 and a one-stroke victory in the Pertamina Indonesia President Invitational in Jakarta.

The sparely built star from Bacolod broke into tears after nipping India's Gaganjeet Bhullar with a 19-under-par 269 total and walking away with the winner's check of $55,475 (about P2.45 million).

With his first pro win, Pagunsan leaped to 33rd position from 80th on the Asian Tour's UBS Order of Merit with total earnings of $92,027.

ASIAN TOUR NEWS

JUVIC Pagunsan: Last-hole eagle does it.

JAPAN GOLF TOUR

FRANKIE Miñoza: Birdie on sudden death hole.

Miñoza, now with seven career wins in Japan, closed out with a two-under-par 70 and found himself tied after 72 holes with Lee, who rallied with a 66 at the ABC Golf Club course.

The third shots of the two made the difference on the first extra hole—the par-5 18th—as Miñoza hit a wedge to within three feet of the hole before Lee's shot spun back from the edge of the green into the water en route to a double bogey.

After opening with a 69, Miñoza climbed into a tie for first by shooting a 64 before slipping to second in the third round with a 71.

Shingo Katayama of Japan was third at 275.

Miñoza placed as high as second on the Asian Tour Order of Merit before moving over, starting last April, to the Japan circuit, where he finally struck paydirt on his 17th tournament of the season.

Ironically, his second triumph of the year came after he missed the halfway cut a week earlier at the Bridgestone Open with rounds of 73-71.

Pagunsan, who started with rounds of 66-67, shot a 71 in the third round which he completed earlier in the day, then moved into contention with four birdies on the front nine.

"I am speechless, it was the perfect finish for me. I've enjoyed my time on the Asian Tour and this is what I've been waiting for in my career," said Pagunsan.

"I would like to dedicate this win to my wife (Maria Eleana) and my daughter (LJ) as they've supported me all the way. I would like to thank my sponsors and everyone who has been there for me," added the Filipino young gun.

Pagunsan first tied for the lead with a birdie on the 13th hole, fell back with a bogey on the 15th but stayed in touch with Bhullar with a par on the 16th.

Bhullar, playing in front of Pagunsan's flight that included veteran Ryder Cupper Lee Westwood of England, actually birdied the 17th and 18th but the Filipino also birdied 17 before reaching the par-5 18th green in two.

After Westwood holed a 25 foot putt for eagle to finish with a 70 and a tie for third spot alongside American Anthony Kang, Pagunsan studied his eagle putt briefly then wasted no time sinking it, pumping his fist ala-Tiger Woods when the ball disappeared.

"I wasn't hitting it too well coming into this tournament but Tony Lascuna and Jerome Delariarte gave me a good tip on my swing which helped. They said I was moving too much on my swing so I remained focused, adjusted well for a top finish.

Delariarte earlier finished tied for 29th at 281 after a 71 while Gerald Rosales wound up at 286 after a 72. Lascuna missed the 36-hole cut.

With a report from Asian Tour News

Payla a win from Olympics

PAYLA: Into last 16

By Dennis U. Eroa, *Inquirer Libre*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS—FLYWEIGHT VIOLITO Payla moved closer to an Olympic berth as he whipped Khalid Said of England, 29-15, Saturday to enter the round of 16 in the International Amateur Boxing Association World Boxing Championships at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion here.

Standing in the way of Payla's dream run to the 2008 Beijing Olympics is flamboyant American Rau'shee Warren, bronze medalist in the 2005 World Championships and, like the Filipino, a veteran of the 2004 Athens Olympics.

PAYLA/ A28

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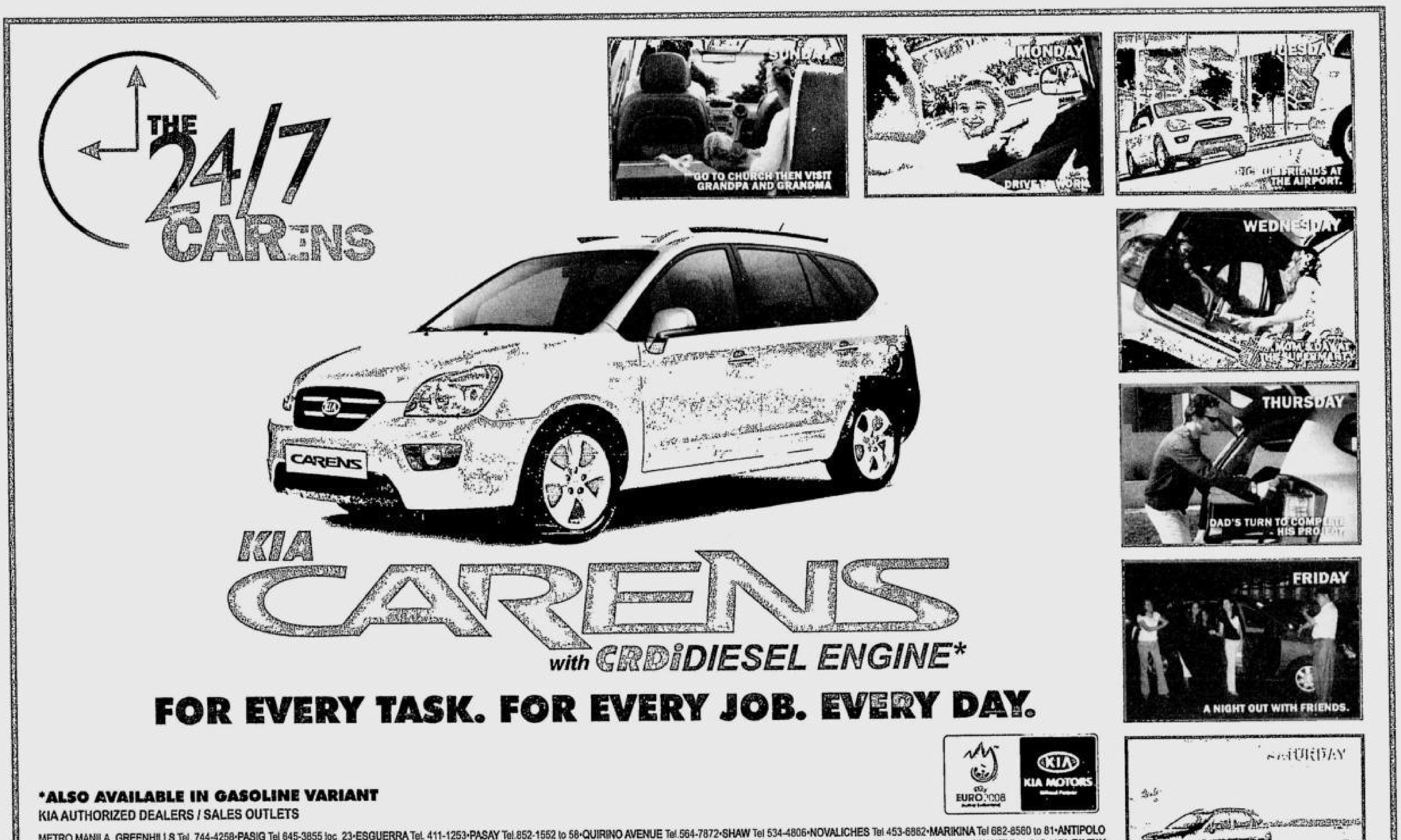
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Traditional outpaces Tumbok Cup field

TRAINER Renato Hipolito receives from Inquirer Publications president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez (fourth from left) the Trainer's trophy after his horse Traditional won in the 3rd Tumbok Cup race during the awarding ceremony also graced by (from left) Tumbok managing editor Roni Briones, MJC VP for racing Admiral Juan De Leon, commissioner Boboc Domingo, Alex Prieto, Inquirer Publications Inc. VP for operation Imee Alcantara, Greg Perez and Paolo Prieto.

CARMONA, CAVITE—TRADITIONAL, under Ferdinand Raquel, picked up the pace heading into the final quarter yesterday and rallied to win the third edition of the Tumbok Cup at the San Lazaro Leisure Park here.

The three-year-old New Zealand filly, sent off as the first pick, broke out fourth in the six-horse field and slowly picked off the speedballs one by one to clock an impressive 1 minute and 33.6 seconds for the 1,500-meter race.

Her time, with quarters of 18, 25, 24, 26', rewarded owner Don Antonio Floirendo, a long-time fixture in the races, the top prize of P180,000.

Serious Susie, probably the most battle-scarred entry in the field with Patty Dilema on top, finished second about four lengths off Traditional. She was followed home by Mamaya, Lady Line, Midnight King and Please Do in that order.

Inquirer Publications Inc. president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and board chair Marixi Prieto and husband Alex led a star-studded list of presenters of the handsome trophy and prize money to the connections of Traditional.

Tumbok managing editor Roni Briones was also in the awards rites, together with Imee Alcantara, IPI VP for operations, and inquirer.net president Paolo Prieto.

"That was the strategy, to rally in the final 400 meters," said a beaming Renato Hipolito, Floirendo's former top rider who now conditions most of the multimillionaire businessman's horses.

Raquel asked for the juice at the right moment, goading the daughter of Traditionally out of Another Roof splendidly to win with plenty to spare and bag one of the more prestigious championships of the year.

Midnight King, ridden by Val Dilema, was somewhat of a disappointment, failing to grab the lead right from the get-go despite starting out from stall No. 1.

The event, supported by Philracom, MJCI and the Inquirer and Bandera special races, benefited the Gifts and Grace charity project under project manager Greg Perez. *Musong R. Castillo*

Dumaguete, Manila nines upset foes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MARIKINA'S Carlo Banzon steals to third against Forward Taguig in yesterday's game at the Rizal ballpark. RODEL ROTONI

THE UNDERDOGS HAD THEIR day in the park.

Dumaguete and Manila bucked the odds and pulled off similar upset wins yesterday in the Baseball Philippines Series 2 at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

Scoring five runs in the first four innings, including a solo homer by Elmer del Socorro in the first frame, Dumaguete held on to nip defending champion Makati, 6-5, for its first win in four games.

National pitcher Charlie Labrador struck out seven and gave up five hits in a no-relief stint while Marvin Malig drove in two runs as Manila slapped a first loss on Cebu, 4-2.

Marikina later blanked Taguig, 3-0, to post its second straight victory and tie Cebu for the lead with a 3-1 record.

Dumaguete gained a tie with Taguig at 1-3 behind Manila, which evened its card at 2-2.

Malig had two RBIs in four times at bat with his single to the left field in the first inning driving home national team catcher Rommel Roja as the Sharks stormed to a 3-1 lead.

He again produced a run-scoring single in the sixth off Joseph Orillana, who failed to get the job this time while taking over from Korean teammate Ha Seung-jun.

Ha, patiently being groomed by Cebu manager Isaac Bacarisas, gave up six of the nine hits Manila hacked out in securing a second straight victory.

"It's becoming embarrassing already, but the boys gave it their all today," said Dumaguete team manager Lito Pulgo.

After Del Socorro's home run, Dumaguete added three more runs in the second inning with Meljohn Aranzanso producing a run with a triple before scoring on a single by national team pitcher Darwin dela Calzada.

"Slowly we are becoming comfortable playing with each other," said Pulgo.

Dumaguete went on to take a 6-2 lead before Makati closed the game with three runs in the last two frames.

Linescores:
First Game
CEBU 100-010-000—2 5 4
MANILA 300-001-00x—4 9 0
Second Game
MAKATI 002-000-012—5 11 2
DUMAGUETE 131-100-00x—6 9 2
Third Game
MARIKINA 010-020-000—3 7 3
TAGUIG 000-000- 000—0 5 1

Tams clip Eagles for Unigames cage crown

By Cedelf P. Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—FAR EASTERN UNIVERSITY silenced Ateneo's guns with a crippling half-court defense in the first three quarters and hacked out a 65-59 decision yesterday to wrap up the men's basketball crown of the 12th Philippine University Games here.

The Tamaraws gave the Eagles no easy shots for most of the three quarters while their inside-outside game, anchored on JR Cawaling and Reil Cervantes, clicked as they completed a seven-game sweep of the tournament.

"The team is improving; we were very consistent on defense," said Tamaraws coach Glen Capacio, whose squad survived West Negros College, 93-88, in the Final 4.

The Tamaraws raced to a 37-20 cushion on a Paul Sanga triple, and Andy Barroca, Cawaling and Cervantes took turns in keeping the Eagles at bay.

The Eagles were so out-of-sync in the third period that they even allowed FEU guard John Alisbo to score unmolested following a free-throw miss from Aldrich Ramos.

By the time the Eagles found their rhythm again, the Tamaraws were beyond recall as Cawaling highlighted his 17-point effort with a triple with four minutes left, giving FEU the game's biggest lead, 56-35.

Yuri Escueta and Kirk Long combined for 12 points in the final two minutes to set the final score.

Adamson dumped University of Mindanao, 80-66, for the women's basketball crown.

West Negros College salvaged third place in the men's division with a 70-67 triumph over Angeles University Foundation.

The scores

FEU 65—Cawaling 17, Cervantes 13, Ramos 9, Sanga 7, Barroca 6, Kave 6, Abaring 5, Alisbo 2, Knuttel 0, Garcia 0, Cabagnot 0, Mangahas 0.

ATENEO 59—Al-Hussaini 12, Baclao 11, Salamat 8, Escueta 8, Long 7, Gonzaga 6, Reyes 4, Nkemakolam 3, Monfort 0, Baldos 0, Rivera 0, Barracoso 0, Sumalinog 0.

Quarters: 20-11, 38-23, 53-35, 65-59

Pinoys bag team trap bronze

JETHRO Dionisio, Eric Ang and Carlos Carag (from left) show their hard-won bronze medal in team trap—the Philippines' first medal in the Asian meet.

RANGED AGAINST THE BEST SHOOTERS IN ASIA, Filipino marksmen proved they were up to the challenge, winning the bronze medal in the men's team trap event Friday in the 2007 Asian Clay Shooting Championship at the PSC-PNSA Shooting Range at the BuCor Compound in Muntinlupa City.

The Filipinos, bannered by Olympian Jethro Dionisio, Eric Ang and National Open trap champion Carlos Carag, shot 335 birds to place third in the event where India ruled in both the team and individual divisions.

The Indians won with a 354 total with Manavjit Singh Sandhu securing the individual gold with 122.

Kuwait bagged the silver with 345 in the championships backed by the PSC, Pagcor, Nike, Coca-Cola and Renaissance Hotel, the official hotel.

Dionisio, a three-time world practical shooting champ, and SEA Games titlist Ang shot identical 114s to go with Carag's 107 for the Philippines' first medal.

"That's a good sign going into the 24th SEAG in Thailand," said organizing committee chair Gay Corral.

Thailand submitted a team score of 320 birds. Singapore scored 311 while Malaysia struggled with 303.

Kuwait's Almudahf Khaled, who also took the individual silver, fired 120, with Alfaihan Abdulrahman chipping in 112 and Meqlad Naser making 113.

India dominated the field as Anwer Sultan and Zoravar Singh Sindhu racked up identical scores of 118s behind the individual champion Singh Sandhu.

Payla just a win from …

From page A27

"I'm ready to face anyone in my class," said Payla in a supreme show of confidence. "Even today, I'm willing to fight Warren."

Payla is a southpaw like Warren but stands an inch shorter than the 5-foot-4 American. They collide on Wednesday (Thursday in Manila) with the winner barging into the quarterfinals and earning a much-coveted ticket to Beijing.

Payla, 28, has all the reasons to feel confident. After mauling Andrew Selby of Wales in the preliminaries last Thursday, the Doha Asian Games gold medalist took the fight out of Said with his varying punches.

To the delight of the Filipino-Americans in the gallery, Payla ended the first round with a comfortable 8-3 lead. Counterpunching excellently, Payla made it 16-9 halfway through the one-sided bout.

UST, Ateneo spikers triumph

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS RIPPED winless Letran, 25-13, 25-14, 25-13, to solidify its bid in the Shakey's V-League Second Conference at The Arena in San Juan yesterday.

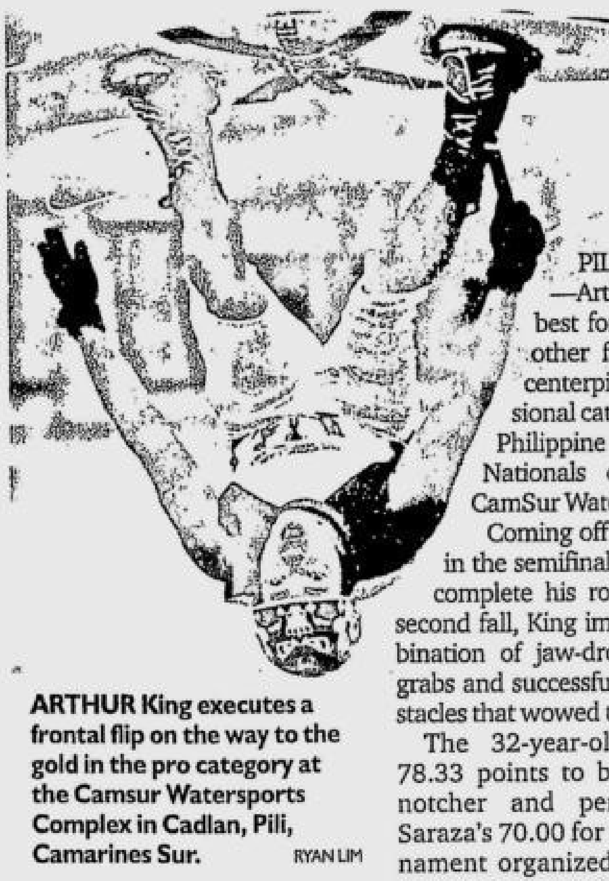
Maria Angeli Tabaquero delivered all her 12 points on attacks while Venus Bernal came away with 11 of her own for another 12-point output for the Tigresses, who booked their third win in four starts for second place.

Ateneo leaned on Thai import Lithawat Kesinee, who had 31 points built around 21 kills, as the Lady Eagles survived a stubborn Lyceum side, 25-21, 17-25, 27-25, 25-22.

Ateneo thus tied UST at 3-1 while Lyceum joined Letran at the bottom of the standings with identical 0-4 cards.

Guest player Suzanne Roces also churned out an 11-point game but let the UST mainstays control the contest with the power game and superb court coverage.

King prolongs wakeboard rule



ARTHUR King executes a frontal flip on the way to the gold in the pro category at the Camsur Watersports Complex in Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur. RYAN LIM

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—Arthur King saved his best for last, humbling five other finalists to keep the centerpiece men's professional category title of the 2nd Philippine Cable Wakeboard Nationals competition at the CamSur Watersports Complex.

Coming off a so-so performance in the semifinals, where he failed to complete his routine after taking a second fall, King impressed with a combination of jaw-dropping tricks, spins, grabs and successful hurdling of the obstacles that wowed the crowd.

The 32-year-old hotelier scored 78.33 points to beat semifinals topnotcher and perennial rival Dan Saraza's 70.00 for the title in this tournament organized by Philippine Water Ski and Wakeboarding Federation (PWWF) led by its president, Camarines Sur Gov. Lray Villafuerte.

The victory also assured King, who ranks 11th in the world in the masters category, a slot to the World Championships slated here next year.

Ricky Otilla finished third with 61.67 points, followed by Edwin Tipones (53.33) and Nino Tosio.

Jeena Lopez upset defending champion Martha King to rule the Open Women. She scored 64.00 to beat Joyce Recto (58.33), Andrea Sevilla (49.00) and King (48.67) for the title.

Ernesto Lopez ruled the Veteran's division, while Janușon Dy topped the Masters class. Ma. Josefa Feliza Ermita and Kathleen Reyes took the Junior Women's and Girls' titles, respectively.

The governor's son Julio Villafuerte won the Junior Men's class while Luigi Villafuerte ruled the Groms category.

Batangas teener continues to make waves in POF

GOLDEN GIRL: Christine Grace Tan. RAFFY LERMA

By June Navarro

NAGA CITY—CHRISTINE GRACE TAN OF Batangas snatched three more gold medals in the pool while Michaelmars Danila gave the hosts something to be proud of on the penultimate day of the Philippine Olympic Festival Bicol-Southern Tagalog qualifying games here.

The lovely 14-year-old national team aspirant added the girls' 14-under 100-meter breaststroke, 200m backstroke and 200m freestyle titles to her previous collection, increasing her total output to 10 gold medals.

Medal tally	G	S	B
Laguna	98	71	40
Cavite	82	52	37
Naga City	64	71	81
Cam. Sur	13	27	21
Batangas	13	2	3
Or. Mindoro	7	4	6
Lucena City	6	0	0
P. Princesa	3	2	3
Cam. Norte	2	2	2
Palawan	0	2	1
Masbate	0	1	0
Albay	0	0	1

Tan clocked two minutes and 24.21 seconds in the 200m free to defeat Camarines Sur's Anabelle Bernas (2:39.48) and Patricia De Leon of Naga (2:39.64). The high school sophomore from Trace Aquatics Center completed the 200m backstroke in 2:52.89.

Laguna's Julie Joy Delas Alas settled for silver with a time of 3:01.47 while teammate Erin Valte copped the bronze (3:05.70).

The 5-foot-5 Tan submitted a clocking of 1:23.14 in the 100m breast to topple Camarines Sur's Lorena Agnas and Delas Alas.

A member of the national pool, Tan also won in the 100m free, 100m back, 400m IM, 800m free, 200m IM, 200m fly and 50m free.

Danila was a gold short of matching Tan's output. The 19-year-old computer engineering student from Ateneo de Naga boosted his haul to nine golds after scoring wins in the 200 IM, 200 fly, 50 free, 200 back and 200 breast.

Naga capitalized on Danila's accomplishments to keep up with leaders Laguna and Cavite in the overall race.

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Red Sox go 3-0 vs Rockies

DENVER, COLORADO—EVERYBODY KNEW JAPANESE STAR pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka of the Boston Red Sox could throw with typhoon force. His World Series debut, coming against the Colorado Rockies, also showed he is a samurai with a bat and has ninja-like fielding reflexes too.

Matsuzaka became the first Japanese starting pitcher in the history of the World Series in Boston's 10-5 triumph Saturday over Colorado, putting the Red Sox on the verge of a sweep in the best-of-seven Major League Baseball final.

The 27-year-old right-hander struck out five in 5 1/3 innings, allowing only three hits with 66 strikes in 101 pitches for the victory and contributed a two-run single—his first US hit—as part of a six-run third inning.

"I thought he pitched really well," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said. "That's the best life he has had on his fastball in some time. He threw some good changeups."

Matsuzaka also won a personal battle against former Seibu Lions teammate Kazuo Matsui of the Rockies, even though Matsui hit Matsuzaka's first pitch—a 91-mph fastball—for a single and took second base on a fielding error.

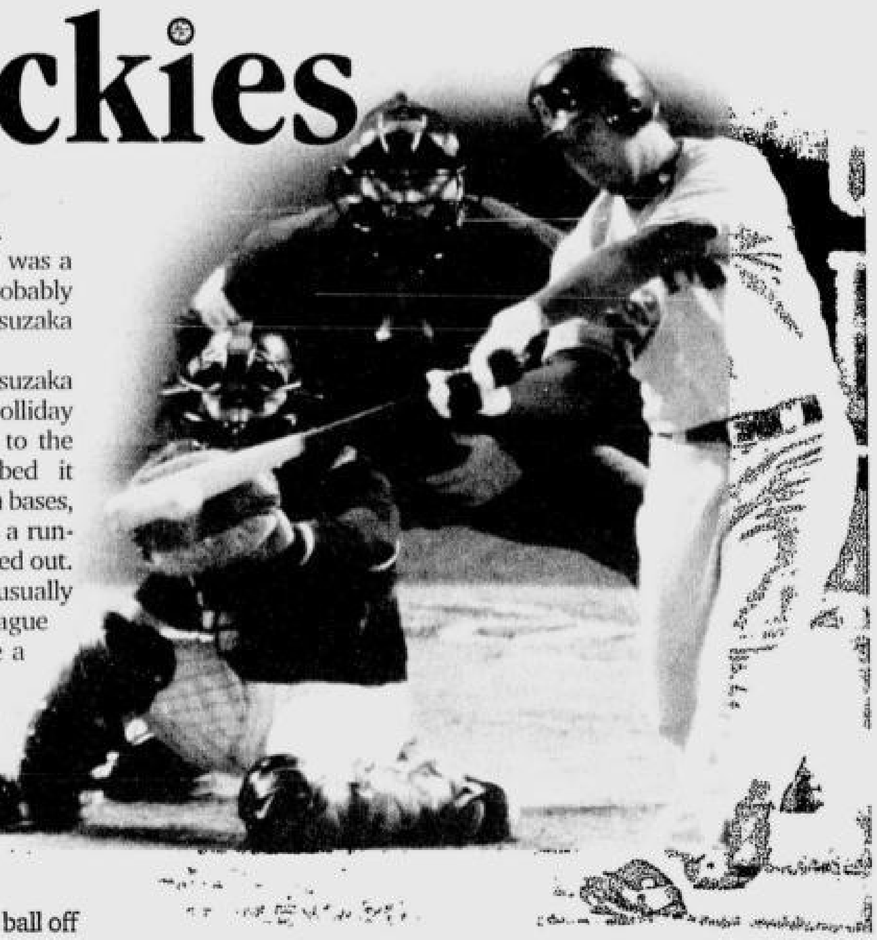
"I knew if the first pitch was a fastball that Kazuo was probably going to come after it," Matsuzaka said.

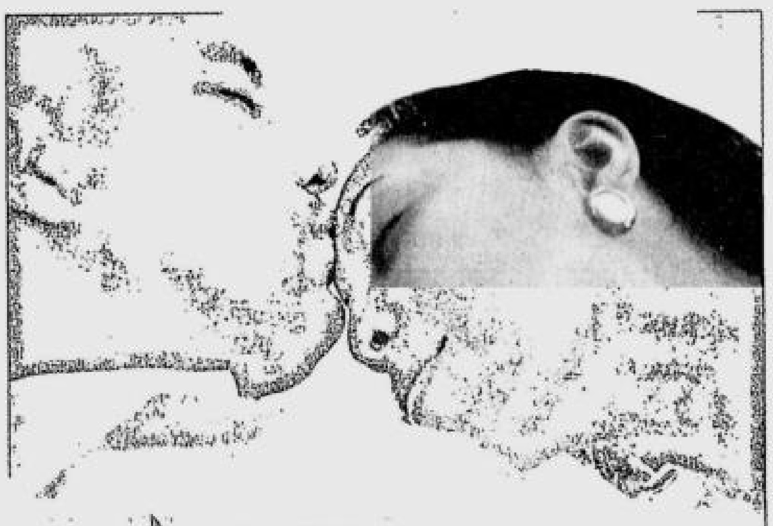
After a strikeout, Matsuzaka forced Colorado's Matt Holliday to hit a ground ball back to the mound. Matsuzaka grabbed it and caught Matsui between bases, eventually catching him in a rundown that saw Matsui tagged out.

Matsuzaka would not usually bat since American League clubs like the Red Sox use a designated hitter.

But Series rules in National League parks require pitchers hit, so Matsuzaka came to the plate in the third inning with the bases loaded.

Matsuzaka smacked the ball off Colorado starter Josh Fogg to left field, driving in two runs for a 5-0 Boston lead. *AFP*


KNOWN more for his pitching, Boston Red Sox's Daisuke Matsuzaka (right) hurts the Rockies with his bat. REUTERS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Norwood just waiting for Baculi's move

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE ALL-AMATEUR PHILIPPINE TEAM will turn down any late inclusion in its roster even if it means rejecting Fil-Am sensation Gabe Norwood.

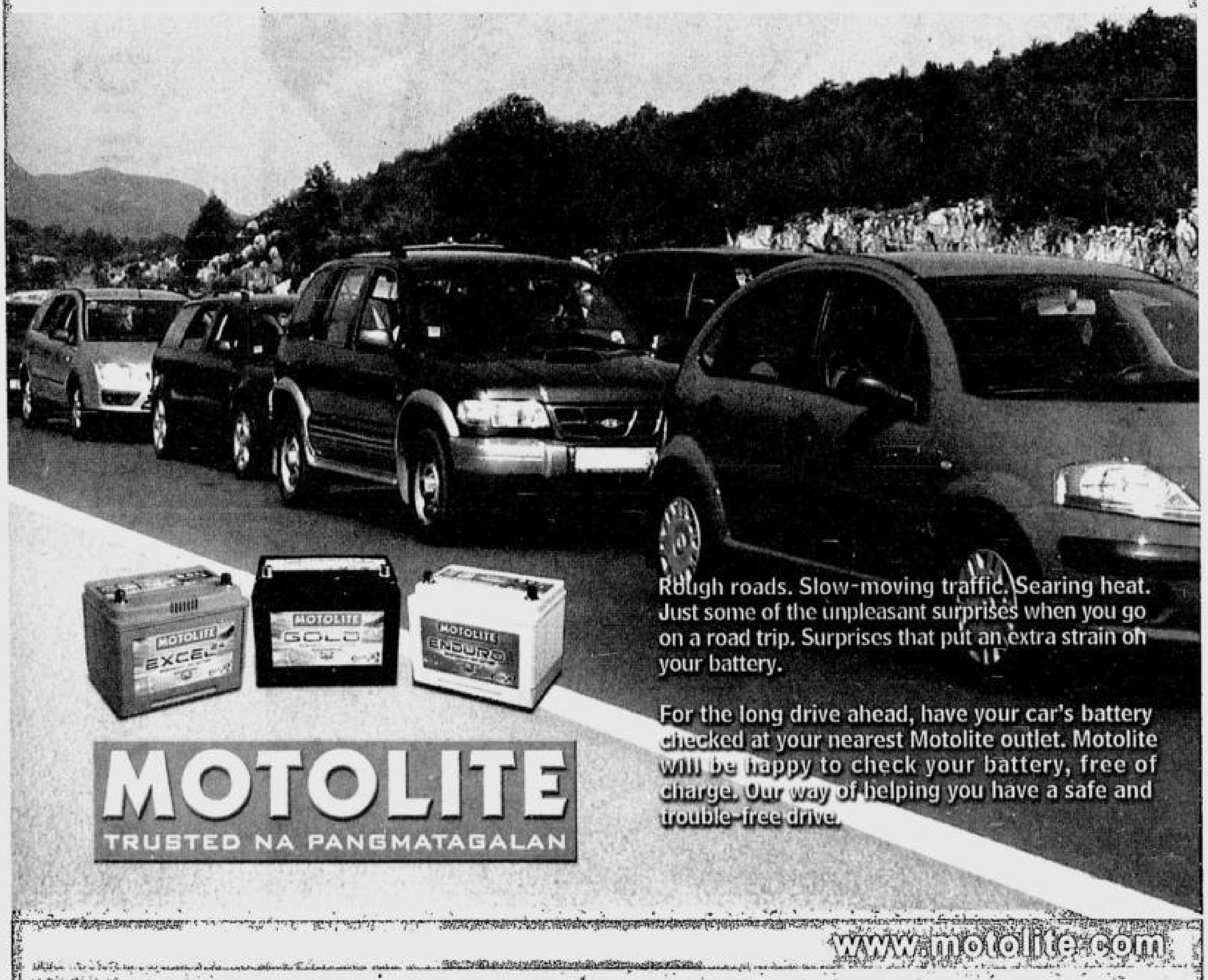
"If he joins us on the last week of November—and this is for any player, not just Norwood—he will have a hard time," said national coach Junel Baculi.

But Norwood claimed the RP team has yet to officially show interest in getting him to join the Nationals although his own team, Hapee Toothpaste, had already expressed willingness to lend him to the squad preparing for the coming Southeast Asian Games.

"Since I got back, no one has contacted me from the RP Team," said the Fil-Am ace Norwood, who played with the national five in the Fiba Asia in Japan last July.

The 6-foot-5 guard, though, has yet to showcase his real talent after averaging only 6.5 points in two games with Hapee.

"I'm working with what I have," said Baculi.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RODOLFO Tacadino outsprints Elmer Sabal to the finish line.

MILO MARATHON

Tacadino, 44, pips Sabal in Tuguegarao 21K

TUGUEGARAO CITY—WHAT'S a 44-year-old doing in a highly competitive 21-kilometer foot race apart from trying to make it to the finish line with a clocking just right for his age?

For Rodolfo Tacadino, it's to win—and do it with aplomb.

Tacadino beat Sultan Kudarat's Elmer Sabal in a dramatic sprint to the payoff line yesterday to rule the Tuguegarao qualifying race of the 31st National Milo Marathon—his 11th Milo leg championship in a checquered running career.

The veteran Armyman timed an impressive one hour, eight minutes and three seconds and towed five other qualifiers, including the top three women, to the national finals slated Nov. 18 in Metro Manila.

Sabal, younger brother of former national champion Cresenciano Sabal and 20 years Tacadino's junior, settled for second place with a time of 1:08:05.

Third—and the last men's qualifier—was 26-year-old Joel Bengtay, winner of last year's Dagupan City leg, who clocked 1:09:18.

Topping the ladies' 21K race was first-time winner Edlyn Mabag who clocked 1:26:20.

Sandy Abahan crossed the finish line 39 seconds behind Mabag and took second place honors.

Joing Mabag and Abahan to the national finals of this annual foot race held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas and the Department of Tourism was Lolinor delos Santos who timed 1:28:40.

For their feat, Tacadino and Mabag each pocketed P10,000 and received an elegant trophy from Milo.

The winners in the 5K fun run were Rodel Mark Ebojo (14:04), Rogen Sendol (14:16) and Enesel Casagan (14:26) in the men's division and Reslyn Buyuccan (24:17), Sarah Jane Bagual (24:18) and Rezan Joy Orge (24:19) in the women's race.

The Milo Marathon caps its 23-leg elimination series on Sunday in Baguio City.

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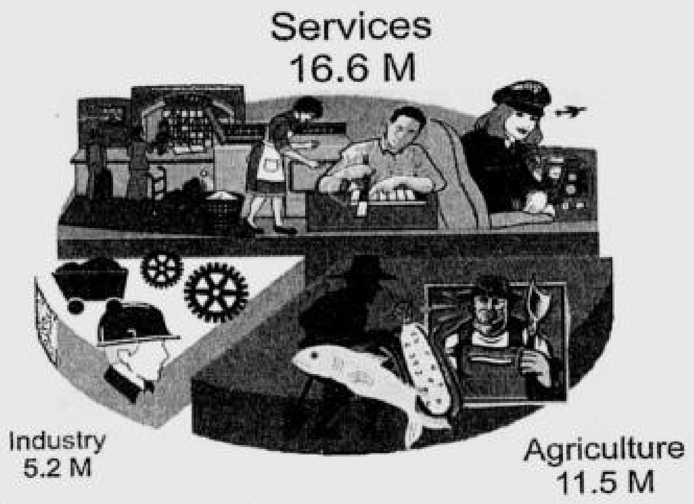
Politics seen curbing growth momentum

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Services sector biggest employer (Labor Force Survey)

Nearly one in every two Filipinos employed as of July 2007 was with the Services sector.



Source: National Statistics Office
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

HSBC economist says RP fiscal reforms in peril

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE POLITICAL SCANDALS ROCKING THE PHILIPPINES COULD curb the government's fiscal reform momentum and dash hopes of any sovereign credit-rating upgrade anytime soon, an economist from British banking giant HSBC has warned.

"Recent political scandals will make it harder for the President to advance a new wave of policy reforms, especially relating to improving the underlying public sector finances," HSBC regional economist Frederic Neumann said in a commentary dated Oct. 22.

Despite a disappointing tax revenue growth, the Hong Kong-based Neumann said the government was now closing in on its full-year deficit target of P63 billion. But excluding privatization receipts, he pointed out that the government's fiscal performance was "less impressive," suggesting that more reforms were needed.

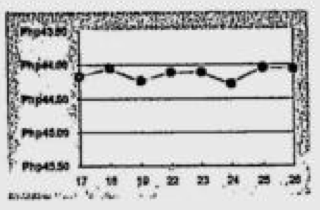
Ambitious expenditure plans and sluggish tax collection were likely to keep the budget in deficit for the foreseeable future, Neumann predicted.

The government has made a commitment to wipe out its budget deficits with

POLITICS / B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



OCTOBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

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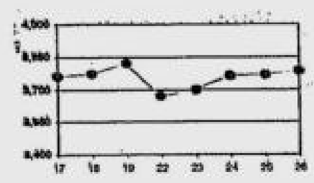
As of 5 p.m., Oct. 26, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

OCTOBER



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Investors to track Fed move

STOCK MARKET INVESTORS ARE poised to track possible interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve despite a two-day trading session this week.

The stock market is closed today for the barangay and youth council elections and on Nov. 1 and 2 for religious holidays.

The US Federal Open Market Committee is set to meet on Oct. 31 to determine the fate of its key Fed funds rate.

Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management Inc., said buying last week reflected positioning ahead of a FOMC meeting wherein investors are betting on a 25-basis-point cut in the Fed rate.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Consumer prices remain stable despite oil spike

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE SPIKE IN WORLD PRICES OF oil should not cause increases in the prices of basic goods, according to the National Price Coordinating Council.

However, Trade Undersecretary Zenaida C. Maglaya said there were other factors such as production area, seasonality, ample supply, demand for the product and weather that could affect prices.

Still, Maglaya said producers and manufacturers "generally" assured the council that prices would remain at current levels.

Based on DTI documents, the price of chicken should generally be at about P120 a kilo, pork at P140 a kilo and fish at P80 a kilo.

"Prices of processed and manufactured commodities such as sardines, meat and instant noodles remained the same," Maglaya said, citing results of the regular market monitoring.

"We got assurance from officials of the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. that there would be no price increase until the Christmas season," she added, referring to the NPCC meeting held last Friday.

Maglaya added that officials of the United Broilers Raisers Association assured consumers of ample supply of chicken up to the holiday season because of buffer from their special imports.

She said a decrease in prevailing prices of vegetables was also noted compared to mid-October prices, except for the erratic price of tomatoes due to the rainy season.

As for sugar, prices are expected to ease in the next two weeks following an increase in domestic supply.

On the other hand, prices of flour went up 13.4 percent from P680 a bag in September to a range of P735 to P760.

Maglaya said the increase was due to an upsurge in the price of wheat—a major component in making flour—due to a decline in production caused by heavy rains and massive droughts in Eastern Europe and North Africa.

"The price of wheat is still high and we can see that our bakers can no longer shoulder the cost," Maglaya said.

"We're looking at increasing the volume of imports through Philippine International Trading Corp.," she said. "We will be working with importers of flour to be able to use the PITC line."

Maglaya added that the DTI would continue to strictly monitor prices of prime commodities and apprehend profiteers that would take advantage of hapless buyers.

Subsidies to state firms hit ₱15.5B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL government spent P15.53 billion in the first nine months of the year in subsidies to financially dependent state-owned firms, a 68-percent jump from only P9.25 billion in the same period a year ago.

Of the total subsidies, P4.341 billion went to government financial institutions (GFIs), while P11.19 billion was granted to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), documents from the Department of Finance showed.

In September alone, subsidies reached P1.02 billion, 4 percent up from P977 million in the same month last year.

Subsidies are provided by the national government to state-owned firms that need extra liquidity to ensure their continued operations.

The rise in subsi-

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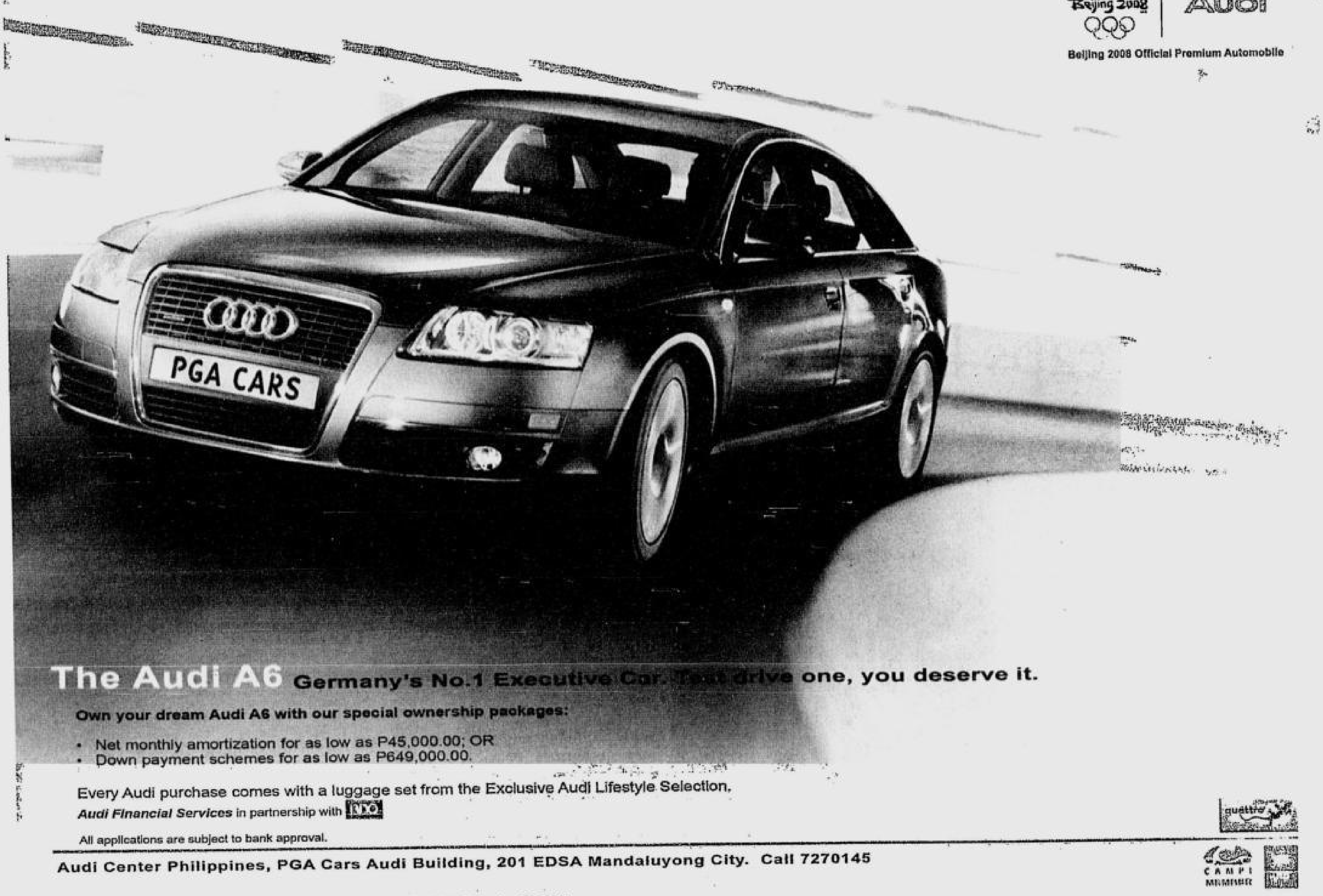

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Splash sees 41% jump in '07 profit to ₱282M

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS GIant Splash Corp. said its nine-month net sales reached P1.9 billion, bringing it closer to its full-year target of P2.9 billion, chief finance officer Noel Manucom said.

Full-year net sales are expected to grow 16 percent, with 13 new product launches seen to contribute 14-16 percent of that growth.

Historically, Manucom said the fourth quarter was a strong period for Splash, contributing P1 billion worth of net sales.

He added that the net income could go as high as P282 million this year, up 41 percent from the previous year's level.

Splash chair Rolando Hortaleza said the company was spending between P800 million and P1.2 billion for two to three possible brand acquisitions to further grow the company.

Splash plans to raise between P1.94 billion and P2.5 billion from a public offering that will start on Nov. 6. The offer period ends on Nov. 12 while the listing date is tentatively set for Nov. 15.

The offering will consist of 223.85 million shares at between P8.70 and P11.18 each.

Of the total public offer, 188.85 million will consist of new shares and 35 million shares will comprise existing stocks to be offered by Splash Holdings Inc., a 100-percent owned investment company of Splash Group founders Rolando Hortaleza and his wife Rosalinda Ang-Hortaleza.

SB Capital Investment Corp. and First Metro Investment Corp. have been tapped as the lead underwriters for the planned listing.

Established in 1985, Splash has grown from a P12,000 backyard business into a P4-billion enterprise that has established market presence in more than 20 countries in Asia, the Middle East and North America.

PSEi forecast to hit 4,200 by June 2008

ONLINE BROKER CITISECONline.com has raised its target for the main stock barometer, the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi), to 4,200 by June 2008 from 3,840 as higher liquidity flows and low interest rates increase investor appetites, CitisecOnline.com said in a recent briefing.

The brokerage said liquidity conditions—or the ability to convert shares into cash—have turned favorable both globally and domestically, pumped up by a 50-basis-point cut by the US Federal Reserve in August and a subsequent local interest rate cut by 25 basis points by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

CitisecOnline added that said the weak economic outlook in the US and an improving local fiscal position, low inflation and a strong peso were expected to dampen any tightening on borrowing costs.

It said excess liquidity was also expected to flow into Asia as regional gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the next two years was expected to reach 7-8 percent, much faster than developed countries' GDP growth of below 3 percent.

In the Philippines, the government expects GDP growth to reach 6-7.8 percent in 2008 and 7-8 percent in 2009, driven by higher government spending, rising investments and consumer spending.

CitisecOnline also said that a slowdown in the US economy would have a small impact on the Philippines since exports to the US now accounted for 17 percent of total exports, down from a high of 40 percent in 1992.

A US slowdown would, however, impact more on remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) since remittances from the US account for around half of total remittances in the country. (Still), the overall impact on consumer spending won't be substantial. This is given that OFW remittances from the US account for only around 7.9 percent of total consumer spending," CitisecOnline said.

The broker also said that improving employment outlook locally, driven by the strong demand from the business process outsourcing sector, rising investments and the increasing availability of cheap and affordable credit should continue to fuel local consumer spending.

However, CitisecOnline cited risks to its index target such as rising commodity prices for food and oil, monetary policy tightening and another negative "credit surprise" similar to the US subprime market problem.

Rising inflation could prompt monetary authorities to raise interest rates, which will negatively impact on market liquidity.

"Nevertheless, Asian economies are less vulnerable to rising commodity prices given their strong currencies relative to the US dollar," the broker said.

Monetary tightening is also highly unlikely due to low inflation and a strong peso and a slowing US economy. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Maybank

Currencies

October 28, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.698275	1.000000	44.0610
Japan	Yen	0.006118	0.008762	0.3861
United Kingdom	Pound	1.432651	2.051700	90.4000
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.090096	0.129027	5.6851
Switzerland	Franc	0.598864	0.857633	37.7882
Canada	Dollar	0.722702	1.034982	45.6023
Singapore	Dollar	0.479552	0.686766	30.2596
Australia	Dollar	0.633012	0.906536	39.9429
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.852631	2.653153	116.9006
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.186629	0.267272	11.7763
Brunei	Dollar	0.477911	0.684416	30.1561
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000076	0.000109	0.0048
Thailand	Baht	0.022203	0.031797	1.4010
UAE	Dirham	0.190168	0.272339	11.9995
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.432100	63.0998
Korea	Won	0.000762	0.001091	0.0481
China	Yuan**	0.093327	0.133654	5.8889
Denmark	Kroner	0.134185	0.192167	8.4671
India	Rupee	0.017745	0.025413	1.1197
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.208223	0.298196	13.1388
New Zealand	Dollar	0.531089	0.760572	33.5116
Sweden	Kroner	0.108642	0.155586	6.8553
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021496	0.030784	1.3564

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Oct. 25, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Oct. 25, 2007

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DLSU-Dasmariñas reaps laurels

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De La Salle University-Dasmariñas ranked first in the 10-25 Examinees category of the October 2007 CPA Licensure Examinations with 10 out of its 11 Batch 2007 graduates passing the board exams, consequently gaining a 91 percent school passing rate. The national passing rate is 37 percent. New certified public accountants are Karlo Eleazar Villafranca Baral, Katherine Mae Suico Bariso, Cherry Ann Rabacio Constantino, Hazel Ann Franco Hapin, Gladys Nambayan Hiquial, Mary Ann Villanueva Lopez, Jona Jade Ele Medina, Ryan Guilbert Castillo Mediran, Arnie Gener Alano Sanqui, and Neenah Servida-Lasam.

The DLSU-Dasmariñas Finance Team
Jane Mary Bayla, Edgeline Jovero, John Rex Millora,
Laila Amon and Mary Joy Morales

Meanwhile, DLSU-D ranked 5th in the 9th Inter-Collegiate Finance Competition – the country's most prestigious competition in the field of Finance. The DLSU-D Finance Team is composed of Laila Amon, Edgeline Jovero, John Rex Millora, Jane Mary Bayla and Mary Joy Morales. CBA faculty members Don Malabanan, Eden Cabrera, and Alice Valerio acted as coaches.

The DLSU-D Finance team automatically qualified to the all-expense-paid Citibank Bankers' Congress. The other schools that landed on the top five are Ateneo De Manila University, UP-Diliman, Singapore Management University, and UP-Iloilo.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of October 28, 2007)

52-WKS HIGH	52-WKS LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.4	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	97,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	62	63	62	63	381,400
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	68	69.5	68	69	1,142,800
748	528	China Banking Corp.	715	715	715	715	630
23.5	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	10,000
75.5	44	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	61	61.5	61	61.5	2,682,800
65.5	34.5	Philippine National Bank	49	49.5	49	49	979,500
68	42	Philippine Savings Bank	62.5	62.5	62.5	62.5	500
39.57	15.65	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28	2,547,800
90	55	Security Bank Corp.	76.5	76.5	75.5	76	592,400
66	44.51	Union Bank of the Philippines	50	50	50	50	65,600
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.92	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	18,000
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	2	2	1.98	1.98	1,793,000
16.25	4.35	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	13.75	14	13.25	13.5	2,100,800
1.6	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	550,000
42.5	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	5,000
5.9	4.9	I-Remit Inc.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,137,000
5	2.95	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.45	3.55	3.45	3.55	583,000
3.1	1.1	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.94	2	1.94	2	16,000
1,130.00	241	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,035.00	1,110.00	1,035.00	1,105.00	21,060
2,355.00	1,945.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,320.00	2,335.00	2,320.00	2,335.00	1,080
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.54	1.56	1,261,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	4,500,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	61.5	62	61.5	62	1,528,000
92	51	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	85.5	85.5	85	85.5	249,700
17.5	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	17	17	16.5	16.75	847,300
105.45	23.18	Manila Electric Company	82	83	82	82.5	1,000,300
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7.4	7.6	7.4	7.6	27,106,000
6.8	3.9	Petron Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.4	6.4	3,982,000
14.75	6.6	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	35,000
1.9	0.99	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.48	1.58	1.48	1.54	8,819,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.2	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	47,000
2.95	1.66	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.86	248,000
2.4	1.08	CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	3,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	500
61	39	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52	52	52	52	602,100
9.1	5.4	Pancake House Inc.	8.5	9	8.5	9	11,000
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.68	0.7	1,750,000
3.8	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	100,000
80	58	San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	58.5	58	58	48,500
88	59.5	San Miguel Corp. B	61.5	61.5	61	61	77,700
0.66	0.31	Swift Foods Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.44	0.44	420,000
6.5	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	15,000
22	13.75	Universal Robina Corp.	14	14.5	14	14.25	10,601,000
0.55	0.26	Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	400,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.64	EEI Corp.	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.6	1,192,000
21.5	6	Federal Resources Investment Group Inc.	13	13	13	13	5,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.3	118,000
7	2.3	Republic Cement Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	113,000
2	0.44	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.08	1.1	9,028,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.45	4.55	4.4	4.5	738,000
2.4	1.31	Euro-Med Laboratories Phil. Inc.	1.98	2.2	1.98	2.2	23,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.17	Picop Resources Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	8,630,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	2.55	A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	28,000
0.17	0.039	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.115	0.11	0.11	13,250,000
1.28	0.235	APC Group Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	4,570,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.85	3	2.85	2.9	631,000
3.7	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. B	2.9	3	2.9	2.95	204,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	18,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	4,400,000
9.7	5.6	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7.1	7	7	23,648,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	269,100,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	2,245,000
1.38	0.54	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.78	0.79	0.78	0.79	130,000
1.5	0.33	Asia Amalgamated Holdings Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	140,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.34	2.34	2.3	2.32	2,423,000
615	397.92	Ayala Corp.	590	600	590	600	770,470
5.8	1.42	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	5,838,000
10.25	4.7	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	1,497,000
6.9	1.08	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	20,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	10,000
3.55	1.54	House of Investments Inc.	2.06	2.06	2.02	2.02	176,000
14.5	7.8	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	11	11	11	11	146,200
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	20,000
2.6	1.2	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	2	2	2	2	10,000
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	2	2	2	2	10,000
11.5	1.48	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.9	7	6.7	6.9	3,585,000
8.5	2.9	PAL Holdings Inc.	7	7.1	6.9	6.9	578,000
0.28	0.013	Pacifica Inc. A	0.215	0.225	0.21	0.22	279,460,000
0.75	0.185	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.47	0.47	1,690,000
2.1	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	30,000
452.5	261.34	SM Investments Corp.	375	375	370	370	486,920
2.1	1.08	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	13,000
0.73	0.13	Sinophil Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	4,310,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	16,200
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	300,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	10,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Company Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	240,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.7	11,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	50,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.75	16	16.25	15,174,200
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.34	776,000
2.04	1.56	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.A	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	30,000
2.1	1.7	Cebu Property Venture and Dev't Corp.B	1.84	1.84	1.82	1.82	200,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	320,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.44	1,060,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.77	7,550,000
0.47	0.055	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	6,860,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	4,091,000
2.44	1.26	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.84	1.8	1.82	31,362,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	930,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	710,000
4.6	1.85	Megaworld Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.25	4.3	12,981,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.75	4.8	355,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.53	1,660,000
23	14	Robinson Land Corp.	20	20.25	20	20	2,954,300
5.9	1.52	SM Development Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	520,000
13.5	6.96	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	4,129,300
3.25	1.22	Shang Properties Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.34	2.4	1,101,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	510,000
0.49	0.09	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.6	12,736,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	134,900
11.75	8	GMA Network Inc.	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.5	332,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.46	476,000
1,745.00	1,110.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,725.00	1,745.00	1,725.00	1,735.00	73,800
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,090.00	3,090.00	3,065.00	3,075.00	75,750
8.1	4.8	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	1,865,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	100,000
12	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	9.5	9.6	9.5	9.6	213,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	2,586,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.042	0.042	0.041	0.041	22,600,000
29.5	8.5	Imperial Resources Inc. A	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,300
2.9	1.48	Ionics Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	184,000
0.32	0.044	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.19	16,000,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	36,000
0.0725	0.03	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.055	84,500,000
5.8	1.34	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.9	3.1	2.9	3	9,415,000
		TRANPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	1,000
47.5	18.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	40.5	41	40	40.5	1,499,200
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	6,000
6	2.16	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	10,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	4,000
0.98	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.6	0.6	1,840,000
1.2	0.5	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	499,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	1.96	Macroasia Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	1,467,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.5	49,300
30	10.5	Paxys Inc.	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.5	3,683,800
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	40,200,000
7.6	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	484,000
21.25	7.8	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	15.5	15.5	15	15.25	966,600
14.25	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	12	12	12	12	5,100
10.5	1.8	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	8.5	9.4	8.2	9.3	4,666,000
3.1	0.57	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.44	2.5	2.4	2.5	116,512,000
0.39	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	11,510,000
0.42	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	3,870,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	10,500,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	18,000,000
30	1.98	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	23.5	24.75	23.5	24	6,479,100
0.021	0.0079	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	27,800,000
9.7	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.2	9.4	9.2	9.3	17,341,000
43.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	40	40	40	40	93,100
1.36	0.47	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.97	990,000
1.8	0.65	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	524,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,100,000
0.029	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.024	0.026	0.024	0.025	465,000,000
0.03	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	47,900,000
29	8.6	PNOC Exploration Corp. B	22	22	19	19	300
11.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	11.25	9.9	11	463,000
0.032	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	582,600,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	954.05 UP	1.87	30,382,500	533,677,350.00
Industrial	4,643.96 DOWN	3.85	120,938,600	936,553,325.00
Holding Firms	2,175.29 UP	40.01	417,241,600	556,835,000.00
Property	1,706.67 DOWN	7.11	179,848,500	744,128,510.00
Service	1,864.52 UP	0.27	84,598,300	980,695,545.00
Mining & Oil	8,229.00 UP	302.68	2,878,325,100	747,472,790.00
All Shares Index	2,348.53 UP	8.20		
PSEI	3,784.88 UP	17.10		
		GRAND TOTALS	3,711,334,600	4,499,362,520.00

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RP, US sign accord to boost Subic, Maryland ecozone trade

Agreement a significant inroad for Subic freeport

By Ronnel W. Domingo

OFFICIALS FROM THE PHILIPINE EMbassy in the United States have signed a memorandum of understanding with a US local government aimed at expanding merchandise traffic and investment flows between Subic and a Maryland economic zone.

Armand C. Arreza, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority administrator, said in a statement that the MOU signed last Oct. 22 was meant to enhance bonds of cooperation between Subic and Prince George's County, Maryland's foreign trade zone.

"This opens up a huge window of opportunity for Subic, and we would like to explore all the possibilities that this new partnership offers," Arreza said.

The official added that the agreement was a significant inroad for the Subic freeport as the SBMA widened its cooperation links in global trade and sought more foreign direct investment.

He said the signatories of the MOU included Philippine Ambassador Willy C. Gaa, Prince George's County Executive Jack B. Johnson and David M. Valderrama, president of the International Council of Asian-American Business Executives.

"This is aimed at facilitating the sharing of experiences and best practices between the two trade zones, improve the quality of operations and logistical efficiency of companies located in both zones, and link the Port of Subic with Maryland's Port of Baltimore," Arreza said.

He added that the exchange of trade information and best practices would be invaluable to Subic because Maryland hosts four trade zones and the Baltimore port, a major center of maritime commerce in the United States.

"Subic has been a military port for over a century and it is only now that its potentials for trade are being realized," Arreza said. "As a commercial port, Subic could learn a lot from Baltimore, which has over 300 years of experience in cargo-handling."

In an effort to develop Subic into a regional logistics and service hub, SBMA has ramped up the freeport's cargo-handling capacity to 600,000 twenty-foot equivalent units and has been wooing investments in terminal operation, drydocking and ship repair, shipbuilding and warehousing.

For its part, the Port of Baltimore—with six public terminals and 30 private terminals stretched over a 45-mile shoreline—is considered the top-ranking port on the US East Coast in terms of roll-on/roll-off cargo operations.

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PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.2145	1.2072
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0245	1.0238
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.3942	1.3978
PELAC Balanced Fund	1.0325	1.0351

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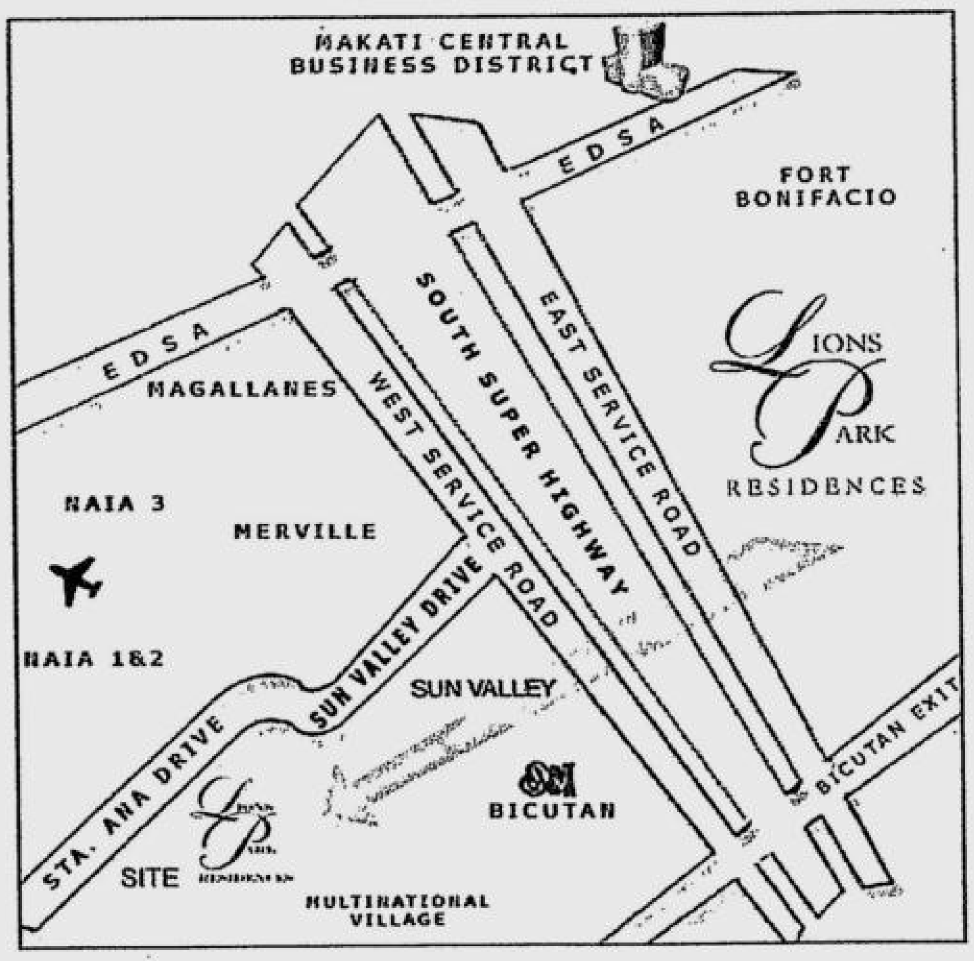


GMA ready for mobile TV competition

Network sets aside P200 million to study, test digital television

By Riza T. Olchondra

GMA NETWORK SAID IT WAS NOT threatened by telecommunications companies offering mobile TV, saying it was ready to compete if regulators blur the line between telecommunications and broadcasting.

"The issue is not competition. The issue is legal," GMA president and CEO Felipe Gozon said in a briefing last week.

"The mobile phone is like a TV set. It can read the same programs that the TV can. But the telcos have no broadcasting authority under their franchise. Telecommunications is only for voice and data. It is not for broadcasting or entertainment. So the NTC (National Telecommunications Commission) is now hard-put to place this activity among the baskets of permits that they have issued. It (mobile TV) might not be worth our time and effort," he said.

Then again, it might be.

Gozon acknowledged that the mobile TV market cannot be ignored. After all, there are far more handsets in the hands of consumers than there are TV sets in their homes.

Of the estimated 13.8 million Philippine households, 9.8 million have TV sets, according to the National Population Census 2000.

In contrast, a total of 50 million GSM subscribers are expected to be registered by yearend by Smart Communication Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc., both of whom have ventured into mobile TV.

How many of these GSM subscribers will actually switch to 3G and watch mobile TV is another story, but GMA Network is not taking any chances.

GMA executive vice president and COO Gilberto Duavit Jr. said the network has set aside P200 million to study digital TV and undertake tests, for which a permit has been secured.

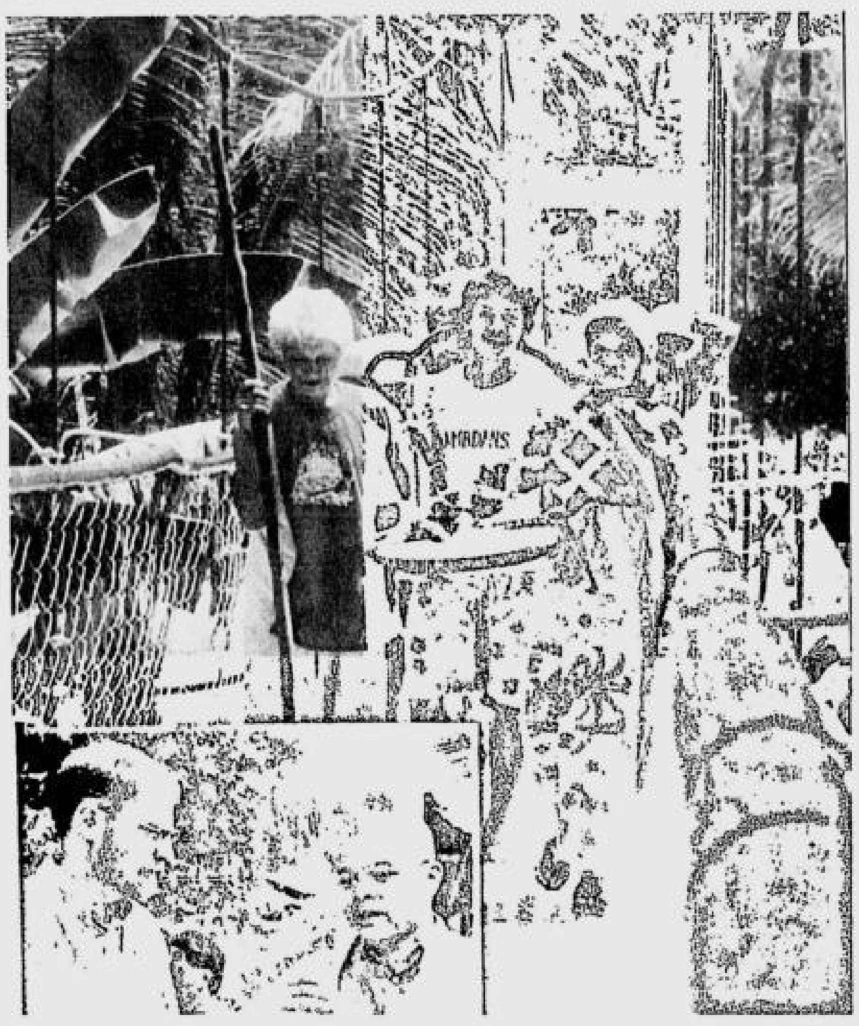
Mobile TV is seen to revolutionize the broadcast industry because it delivers content to many viewers on the fly.

This could do away with programming for "prime time," the time slot traditionally ranging from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Digital programming also allows broadcast companies to cramp six high-quality multimedia streams in one 6Mhz bandwith.

In analog programming, GMA can only broadcast "Marimar" in the 8:30 to 9 p.m. weeknight time slot. Digitally, GMA can add five digital programs tackling sports, technology, education, travel and movies in the same time slot.

"If that happens, we can continue just offering content to partners but we can also broadcast directly to the device. So we are covered." Gozon said in Filipino.



BRIDGING THE DIVIDE
Residents of Barangay Libi in Malapatan, Sarangani now enjoy safe access from their farmland to nearby trading centers with the completion of the Libi footbridge. The footbridge was built by USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program in partnership with the municipal government of Malapatan.

Meralco cuts system losses

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED MANILA ELECTRIC CO. REduced system losses to only 9.12 percent in the third quarter, below the 9.5-percent cap set by the Energy Regulatory Commission.

A low system loss is beneficial to distribution utilities such as Meralco, as every time they go beyond the 9.5-percent cap, they have to absorb a loss because the excess can no longer be passed on to electricity consumers.

System losses within the 9.5-percent cap can still be charged to customers as part of their monthly electricity bills.

Meralco attributed its improved third quarter system loss, which was 0.72 percentage points lower than the 9.84 percent posted in the same period last year, to its intensified campaign against electricity pilferage and the increased share of primary-metered sales in the overall sales mix.

"The campaign against illegal connections and pilferers of electricity led to the apprehension of 7,096 registered services and the arrest of 31 persons involved in the illegal activity. This effort resulted in the recovery of P197 million from payments made by the violators for their previously unbilled consumption," the distribution utility said.

"The recovered amounts from the payments were returned as discounts in the generation charges of Meralco customers. In the third quarter, this discount amounted to 2.6 centavos a kilowatt-hour (kWh)," it added.

To further boost its campaign against power pilferers, Meralco inked separate agreements with the city governments of Manila, Pasay and Quezon on July 25, Aug. 29 and Oct. 26, respectively.

Apart from its intensified efforts against illegal connections, Meralco also attributed its improved third quarter system loss to the increase in the share of primary-metered sales to 29.67 percent from 29.41 percent in the same period the year before.

Meralco explained that energy sales from higher service voltages had lower inherent losses compared to the same energy sales at the lower service voltages.

This was because the electricity transmitted to the end-user passed through fewer lines and substations, thus reducing technical losses.

For the first nine months, Meralco's system loss rate stood at 10.62 percent. The 12-month moving average, on the other hand, was pegged at 9.79 percent.

DA calls for more investments in ingredients industry

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULture has urged the private sector to invest more in the booming natural ingredients industry.

According to Alice G. Ilaga, head of the Department of Agriculture's Biotechnology Program Office, only a few firms have put their money in this industry estimated to be worth at least $1 billion worldwide, and growing.

The DA-BPO is currently encouraging more investments in the cultivation of malunggay, sambong, banaba, lagundi, mangosteen, chichirica, luyang dilaw, saluyot, bawang and atswete, which could be developed to meet global demand for natural ingredients.

"If we want to satisfy the local requirements in malunggay, we need as much as 500,000 hectares. Right now, we barely come close to [supplying] local needs alone," she said.

Ilaga said the demand for natural ingredients was growing because of the consumers' growing preference for nutritious food and organic products.

"Unfortunately, the Philippines has yet to tap the $1-billion world market for natural ingredients. As of now, our market share is probably very insignificant, at less than one percent," she explained.

To speed up the development of the local industry, Ilaga said the DA-BPO planned to put up different research stations across the country.

She explained that these stations will focus on the research and propagation of certain indigenous plants.

Ilaga also recommended the establishment of standards and benchmarks to ensure that all raw materials derived from plants would be accepted by the world market.

For this reason, Ilaga said the DA-BPO has been asking for more funds to be used in clinical trials, facilities and further studies.

Politics ...

From page B1

the help of privatization proceeds by next year. However, credit-rating agencies do not give much weight on nonrecurrent revenues when evaluating sovereign credit.

"There has been no material improvement in tax collections to support sustained increase in spending on infrastructure and social services," Neumann said.

The HSBC economist thus ruled out the possibility of a sovereign credit-rating upgrade for the Philippines "for the foreseeable future."

The Philippines is currently rated at two notches below the much-coveted investment grade by Fitch, three notches below by Standard & Poor's and four notches below by Moody's.

Neumann said the string of political scandals in the country was starting to hurt the Arroyo administration's ability to manage economy.

He said the scandals have "eroded the public goodwill that had been rebuilt as result of faster economic activity and a stronger Philippine peso allowing for easy monetary stance by the central bank."

First, he cited the administration's move to cancel the national broadband project with Chinese firm ZTE Corp. on allegations of bribes being offered to certain officials and local businessmen that failed to win the deal.

Despite the government's backtracking, public pressure has forced the administration to conduct an investigation into the allegations in addition to the Senate conducting its own investigation into the incident, he said.

Neumann also cited perceptions that administration officials had given out money packets to lawmakers at a breakfast meeting with the President on Oct. 10.

He noted that this latest incident had triggered a surprise negative reaction from the Catholic Church, which he described as an institution which has the ability to sway public opinion.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has supported the Senate's plan to formally investigate the allegations of money distribution at the breakfast meeting.

While there was little hard evidence of misconduct or delivering of cash to certain lawmakers, Neumann said the incident has further tarnished President Arroyo's administration as well as the ruling Lakas-CMD image with the public.

"We view the recent political scandals as severely undermining the President's ability to persuade the Congress to pass new policy initiatives to advance structural reforms," Neumann said.

He projected that the opposition-controlled Senate and other special interest groups would be focused on investigating the recent allegations of misconduct and allegations against the government and lawmakers supporting the President.

Seeds of a 'bayanihan' economy

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

A RECENT GATHERING OF REPREsentatives from 26 countries held at the UP Diliman campus brought together people unhappy with the way their respective economies, and the global economy as a whole, have perpetuated ever-widening disparities within and among countries.

The Asian Forum for Solidarity Economy drew hundreds of people from various walks of life, all sharing a desire to find an alternative economic order to the one we know, where a few typically reap benefits at the expense of many others.

As the name suggests, the economy they seek is one where all players work together toward a shared goal of uplifting the lives of all—that is, an economy built on solidarity rather than on competition and conflict.

Inherent conflict

The problem is, conflict and tension are inherent in the market economy as we know it.

Consumers want to pay as low a price as possible for the goods and services they buy, but producers and sellers want to charge as high a price as possible for the same goods and services. Workers want to receive as high a wage as possible from employers. On the other hand, employers are out to pay as low wages as possible to the workers they hire.

Borrowers want to pay as low interest as possible on the loans they obtain from their creditors, but the latter want to charge as high interest as possible. This basic conflict of motives is seen many times over among the players in the various kinds of transactions made in any market economy day after day.

The modern economy, it seems, is built on such conflicting motives among its various players.

Invisible hand

To Adam Smith, considered the father of modern economics, such inherent conflict is natural and necessary. He once postulated that the combined actions of all players in the economy, acting on the basis of each one's self-interest, gives rise to an "invisible hand" that yields efficient outcomes.

For as long as there are large enough numbers of such players and there is free competition among them, market forces will automatically yield the right allocation of the economy's resources and the goods and services they produce.

But does "right" allocation here mean a fair or equitable allocation? This, unfortunately, is where Smith's "invisible hand" fails.

In the direct conflict of motives between buyers and sellers, workers and employers, and debtors and creditors, there is rarely a balance of power between the contending sides, and one side or the other is bound to get the proverbial shorter end of the stick.

In everyday transactions within a competitive economy, there are bound to be winners and losers; win-win outcomes are not the rule, but the exception.

Social responsibility

Solidarity economy advocates believe that such outcome need not be inevitable. Along with our basic instinct for pursuing self interest, human beings also possess an instinct for altruism, that is, for caring and sharing. This same instinct leads us to value the common good and moves us to certain behaviors that may not necessarily promote our own best self-interest all the time.

This instinct comes into play, for example, when a banker or financier chooses to extend credit to smaller, struggling enterprises when dealing with fewer but larger borrowers would appear to be more profitable.

Or an investor deliberately chooses to put funds into a socially responsible enterprise over another that is clearly more lucrative but with possibly adverse social or environmental impacts. Or an entrepreneur opts to forego maximizing profits in favor of providing wider benefits for the firm's workers or customers.

The recent Asian Forum showcased, through exhibits and presentations, real-world models of socially responsible finance, socially responsible investments and socially responsible enterprises, both here and abroad.

In so doing, the forum demonstrated that a more caring economy is indeed possible, while sowing the seeds of a movement that would propagate the ideal of an economy that exemplifies the Filipino concept of *bayanihan*, which aptly captures the very concept of the solidarity economy.

'Bayanihan' products

Prominent Philippine entries included the recently established Bayanihan Banking Window, a partnership between Planters Bank and the CSRSME Asia, which provides a venue for caring investors to deliberately make their funds available to finance socially responsible enterprises.

Also featured was a company that produces the Bayanihan Food Pack, an inexpensive package composed of ready-to-cook meat, vegetables and rice designed to feed a typical poor family for up to two meals.

The company is able to keep the food pack cheap by cutting through the supply chain and procuring directly from farm producers, and envisions supplying low-income communities around the country with decent meals that are both nutritious and affordable.

The movement for a solidarity economy has already taken root in North America and Latin America, as attested by forum participants from those regions.

The recent Asian Forum planted the seeds for a similar movement in the Philippines and the rest of Asia, and culminated in pledges of commitment from numerous stakeholders in the finance, enterprise, academe and media sectors to help in spreading and nurturing the seeds of what would be better described in the Philippines as a Bayanihan Economy.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu.

Subsidies to state firms hit ₱15.5B

From page B1

dies to GOCCs and GFIs defeated the goal set by authorities to reduce the financial dependence of state-owned firms on the national government, which is trying to put its own fiscal house in order.

The DOF had wanted to reduce the subsidies granted to state-owned firms to force them to become less dependent on the national government. But the DOF had said that the increase in subsidies could not be avoided because of the implementation of more social-welfare programs by the state-owned firms that needed additional funding.

The DOF earlier cited the conduct of additional livelihood programs of the Technical Resource and Livelihood Center and the increase in housing projects of the National Housing Authority as some of the reasons for the increase in subsidies.

The DOF also noted that spending for the government's comprehensive agrarian reform program (CARP) also formed part of the subsidies. Although Land Bank of the Philippines is financially stable, it receives state subsidies because it is tasked to facilitate the distribution of funds for the CARP, officials said.

The government programmed to limit the subsidies to state-owned firms to only P4.89 billion for the entire 2007. The goal, however, has already been breached since the end of the first half.

The subsidies in January to September this year had also surpassed the P13.81 billion recorded for the entire 2006.

Although the need of state-owned firms for subsidies increased, the DOF noted that they have been contributing to state coffers in the form of dividends remitted to the national government. The DOF earlier reported that GOCCs and GFIs remitted a combined P8.84 billion in dividends in the first nine months.

The DOF said it has intensified its auditing of the financial statements of GOCCs and GFIs to help ensure that they remit accurate amounts of dividends. State-owned firms are mandated to give at least 50 percent of their net income to the national government.

Export of coco products bounced back in Sept.

Coconut oil drove up shipments by 14.5% to 153,170 MT

By Amy R. Remo

EXPORTS OF MAJOR COCONUT PRODucts bounced back in September this year, growing by 14.5 percent from the same month of the previous year, according to the United Coconut Association of the Philippines (Ucap).

A total of 153,170 metric tons in copra terms were shipped out that month.

Ucap's preliminary data showed that in September 2006, exports had reached 133,825 metric tons.

Last month's shipments were also higher by 4.4 percent, compared to August exports, which had reached 146,721 MT.

According to Ucap, the increase could be solely credited to coconut oil, exports of which rose by 24 percent to 78,328 MT from the 63,166 MT recorded in the same period last year.

Exports of other coconut products however slumped.

For copra meal, export volume plunged by 43 percent to 24,233 MT from 42,506 MT; desiccated coconut delivery fell by 11.7 percent to 10,047 MT from 11,373 MT; while oleochemicals as copra exports slid by 16.7 percent to 13,306 MT from 15,978 MT.

Initial Ucap figures showed that Europe was last month's top destination, with shipments reaching 37,500 MT. This represented 47.9 percent of total sales.

The US meanwhile imported 30,536 MT, accounting for 39 percent of total sales.

Other importers were Japan, which imported 5,292 MT (6.8 percent share); Malaysia with 3,000 MT (3.8 percent); and China with 2,000 MT (2.6 percent).

Exports of copra meal were almost equally split between Korea, with shipments amounting to 12,300 MT, and Vietnam, with 11,933 MT.

From January to September, exports had reached a total of 1.16 million MT in copra terms, which is 25.2 percent lower than the 1.55 million MT recorded in the same period last year.

As of September this year, Ucap said coconut oil exports had reached 582,845, down 28.8 percent from last year's 818,130 MT; copra meal at 262,549 MT, down 20.4 percent from 329,680 MT; desiccated coconut at 96,311 MT, down 7.7 percent from 104,345 MT; and, oleochemicals as copra at 85,159 MT, down 4.1 percent from 88,823 MT.

In 2006, total coconut exports reached 2.03 million MT in copra terms, down 5 percent from the previous year's 2.14 million MT.

That year, coconut oil was the lead export product at 1.07 million MT, followed by copra meal at 429,965 MT.

As for local production, Ucap earlier said that total coconut output is expected to slide by 8.9 percent in 2007 to 2.24 million MT in copra terms, as the industry is still reeling from the adverse effects of storms that had hit the country in the last semester of 2006.

The Philippine Coconut Authority has projected an even lower production of 2.17 million MT, a 12-percent decline from last year's production.

In 2006, coconut production reached 2.47 million metric tons in copra terms, down from the previous year's 2.65 million metric tons.

According to data from the PCA, about 42 million coconut trees were damaged by Typhoon "Reming" alone, which ravaged southern Luzon in late November.

However, PCA administrator Oscar Garin said he expects coconut production to rise to 2.4 million metric tons in 2008, all the way up to 3 million metric tons in 2010.

He said the increase would be brought on partly by the P100-million intercropping program the agency had implemented in the first half of the year.

Metrobank links up with US remittance firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co. has tied up with San Francisco-based money transfer company Xoom Corp. to provide overseas Filipinos an option in remitting money to beneficiaries through the Internet.

In a press statement late Friday, Metrobank and Xoom announced their partnership to provide faster bank deposits to the Philippines.

"We are always looking at how we can extend our services to our overseas Filipino workers," said Metrobank executive vice president Carmelita Araneta. "This partnership will benefit Filipinos particularly in the United States, Europe, Middle East, Singapore and Japan, who can easily remit money to their beneficiaries for as long as they have a Metrobank deposit account."

With a click of a button, Xoom customers can deposit money to any Metrobank account, and the money will be available to the recipient in a few hours. By logging on to www.xoom.com, money can be sent to existing Metrobank depositors in the Philippines.

Remittances can be funded using a bank account, credit card, debit card or PayPal, a web-based account that serves as an electronic alternative to traditional modes such as checks and money orders.

"Serving Filipino remitters is very important to Xoom," said John Kunze, president and CEO of Xoom. "Our partnership with Metrobank will enable us to provide much faster deposits to Metrobank accounts and greater convenience to both senders and receivers."

Metrobank is the Philippines' largest bank, with consolidated assets of P669.3 billion as of June 2007. It is the flagship company of the Metrobank Group, which has a network of over 800 domestic and international offices, operating in 21 countries.

Xoom Corp. was founded in 2001 in San Francisco and is backed by leading venture firms Sequoia Capital, New Enterprise Associates and Fidelity Ventures.

Regulator appoints seventh wholesale aggregator

By Abigail L. Ho

IN PREPARATION for the implementation of retail competition and open access, the Energy Regulatory Commission has appointed GNPower Ltd. Co. to be the country's seventh wholesale aggregator.

According to the ERC, as a wholesale aggregator, GNPower can consolidate the power demand of distribution utilities for the purpose of purchasing and reselling electricity on a group basis.

As a wholesale aggregator, GNPower will serve distribution utilities for its captive market.

As a retail electricity supplier (RES), the firm will attend to contestable market customers, apart from traders at the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM).

GNPower currently holds forward power supply contracts, which will take effect in 2011, with 13 distribution utilities. These power distributors can also serve as the power firm's prospective clients for its wholesale aggregation business.

On top of that, GNPower could also serve the contestable market as an RES, having acquired a license from the ERC.

As for trading in the WESM, under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, the ERC can authorize entities similar to GNPower to become eligible members of the electricity bourse.

"Wholesale aggregation is one innovative concept which has emerged as the electric power industry shifts to a competitive structure," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said.

GNPower was organized in 2002 as a limited partnership designed to operate and own a power generation project and transmission line in the country.

The power firm is currently developing a 600-megawatt clean coal-fired power plant near Mariveles, Bataan, which is expected to be fully operational by 2011.

BIR urged to release Pall Mall stock in the market

By Michelle V. Remo

LA SUERTE CIGAR & Cigarette Factory is pressing the Bureau of Internal Revenue to allow the release of Pall Mall cigarettes from its production facility.

The tobacco firm has expressed its concern over the brand's dwindling presence in the market.

La Suerte is the local partner of British American Tobacco (BAT) in the production and distribution of Pall Mall cigarettes.

The BIR refuses to release the stock of Pall Mall cigarettes from the factory due to the unresolved tax issue involving the brand.

Under the country's tax laws, excise tax on cigarettes and other covered products should be paid before these could be released from production facilities.

The BIR earlier ruled that the brand should be slapped a tax rate of P26 per pack.

But the Department of Finance, the BIR's mother agency, overturned the ruling and said the applicable tax rate was only P6.74 per pack.

The DOF's decision elicited protests from competing cigarette makers, including Philip Morris and Fortune Tobacco.

The competitors said that, since Pall Mall used to be imported by duty-free shops, the brand should be charged the higher excise tax rate.

They stressed that, under the Sin Tax law of 2005, imported cigarettes are imposed the higher excise tax.

Competitors also said that, because the BIR had already made a ruling on the applicable tax rate, then it should be followed.

They said that the Sin Tax law prohibits a downward tax reclassification of cigarettes.

But La Suerte and BAT stressed that there was no downward reclassification because the BIR's ruling was never implemented in the first place, having been immediately contradicted by the DOF.

La Suerte and BAT stressed that locally manufactured Pall Mall was introduced in the market prior to importation by duty-free shops.

The excise tax rate should therefore not be based on its importation.

The two added that importation of Pall Mall had ended last year.

Following the submission of appeals by the competitors, the DOF has subjected Pall Mall taxation under review. The DOF is currently gathering legal opinions on the matter.

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- QTV 11's Moms Lani Mercado, Manilyn Reynes & Sherilyn Reyes
- Barangay LS Band Performance
- Celebrity Auction by GMA Artists
- Fashion Show by Abbylyn
- Performance by Up with People
- Entertainment numbers and autograph signing by GMA Celebrities
- Century Tuna Rich Flavors of Health Culinary Tour
- Cooking Demo by Kusina Argentina

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CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

(Bank and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of September 30, 2007

ASSETS	AMOUNT
Cash and Cash Items	650,245,289 24
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	4,548,882,477 44
Due from Other Banks	7,599,442,645 22
Financial Assets at Fair Value through Profit or Loss	377,991,742.75
Available-for-Sale Financial Assets-Net	7,581,976,767.93
Held-to-Maturity (HTM) Financial Assets-Net	1,779,472,532 93
Unquoted Debt Securities Classified as Loans-Net	33,463,694 00
Investments in Non-Marketable Equity Security-Net	0.00
Loans and Receivables	35,427,087,915 14
Loans to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	0 00
Interbank Loans Receivable	850,853,099 09
Loans and Receivables - Others	34,376,214,816 05
Loans and Receivables Arising from RA/CA/PR/SLB	200,000,000 00
Other Financial Assets	0 00
Equity Investment in Subsidiaries Associates and Joint Ventures-Net	297,256,846 21
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixture and Equipment-Net	2,075,722,471 66
Real and Other Properties Acquired-Net	1,547,515,470 38
Non-Current Assets Held for Sale	163,174,204 04
Other Assets-Net	1,378,309,855 79
Due from Head Office/Branches/Agencies (Philippine branch of a foreign bank)	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	63 460 521 912 73
LIABILITIES	
Financial Liabilities at Fair Value through Profit or Loss	0.00
Deposit Liabilities	53,483,862,610 29
Due to Other Banks	0.00
Bills Payable	0.00
a) BSP (Rediscounting and Other Advances)	0.00
b) Interbank Loans Payable	0 00
c) Other Deposit Substitute	0.00
d) Others	0.00
Bonds Payable-Net	0 00
Unsecured Subordinated Debt-Net	1,967,652,986 78
Redeemable Preferred Shares	0.00
Special Time Deposit	0 00
Due to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	18,258,439 30
Other Financial Liabilities	0 00
Other Liabilities	2,117,617,821.12
Due to Head Office/Branches/Agencies (Philippine branch of a foreign bank)	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	57 587 391 857 49
Stockholders' Equity	
Capital Stock	3,240,202,356 19
Other Capital Accounts	870,612,091 62
Retained Earnings	1,762,315,607 43
Assigned Capital	0 00
TOTAL STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	5 873 130 055 24
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY	63 460 521 912 73
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	
Guarantees Issued	0.00
Financial Standby Letters of Credit	0.00
Performance Standby Letters of Credit	0.00
Commercial Letters of Credit	0.00
Trade Related Guarantees	0.00
Commitments	0.00
Spot Foreign Exchange Contracts	0 00
Securities Held Under Custodianship by Bank Proper	0.00
Trust Department Accounts	11,949,305,462 96
a) Trust and Agency Accounts	0 00
b) Unit Investment Trust Fund (UITF)	0.00
c) Other Trust and Fiduciary Accounts	11,949,305,462 96
Derivatives	0 00
Others	65 557 160 23
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	12 014 862 623 19
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Compliance with Magna Carta Law	
a) 6% for Small Enterprises	30 38%
b) 2% for Medium Enterprises	3.71%
Non-Performing Loans (NPLs)	2,992,643,873.73
Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio (NPL to TLP)	6.70%
Classified Loans & Other Risk Assets	4,991,170,608.80
General provision for loan losses	303,028,768 65
Specific provision for loan losses	1,734,892,262 02
Return on Equity (ROE)	16.91%
DOSRI loans and receivables	8,189,637,241 53
Ratio of DOSRI loans and receivables to TLP	20 79%
Past due DOSRI loans and receivables	607,633,036.71
Ratio of Past due DOSRI loans and receivables to TLP	1.54%
Capital Adequacy Ratio (Solo Basis)	
a) Tier 1 (Solo Basis)	9 46%
b) Total (Solo Basis)	14.05%

Board of Directors

Jose T. Pardo
Chairman

Jovencio F. Cinco
Vice Chairman

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Vice Chairman

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Ma. Theresa G. Barretto

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Senior Vice President

Noli S. Gomez
Senior Vice President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S. S.

We, PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR. and PASCUAL M. GARCIA III of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd) PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR.
First Vice President

(Sgd) PASCUAL M. GARCIA III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 22 October 2007 at City of Makati, affiant exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 21354044 issued at Quezon City on February 19, 2007 and No. 22887853 issued at Quezon City on February 17, 2007.

(Sgd) ATTY. JOSE HERNANDEZ DY
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2008
PTR No. 5273383 - Mla 1-05-07
IBP No. 674804 - Mla 1-05-07
City of Makati

Doc. No. 241
Book No. 49
Page No. CCCIX
Series of 2007

Competition among banks still tough, study shows

Despite M&As, level of market concentration relatively low

By Doris C. Dumlao

COMPETITION AMONG PHILIPPINE banks remains stiff despite the decline in the number of players as a result of big mergers and acquisitions, a Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas study indicated.

In its latest report on the financial system submitted to Malacañang and Congress, the BSP said it had conducted a study on the competitive structure of the domestic universal and commercial banking industry to assess the likely impact of recent bank mergers on the industry.

"The study revealed that the level of current market concentration in the universal/commercial banking system is still relatively low, both in terms of loans and deposits, thereby indicating a generally competitive market," the BSP said.

The central bank's report was based on developments in the first semester, during which the landmark merger between Equitable PCI Bank and Banco de Oro Universal Bank was consummated.

Prior to this deal, other big mergers were completed, such as those between Bank of the Philippine Islands and Prudential Bank, and Union Bank of the Philippines and International Exchange Bank.

The BSP said the overall bank structure in the country was trimmed by 13 operating banks to 858 as of end-June from 871 a year ago.

"The changing banking landscape driven by the growing sophistication of financial markets and large investment outlays required for new technologies prompted banks questing for larger market size, better competitive advantage, higher profits and overall strategic footing to consolidate," the BSP said.

The report said the banking system was in a much better position to face the challenges of a rapidly changing global financial environment.

The BSP admitted that the overall performance for the first semester may be modest compared to international standards but noted that it still underscored the notable improvement in banks' balance sheets on account of continuous asset clean-up and capital build-up.

"Profitability indicators were impressive during the semester in review and highly indicative of banks' efficient maximization of potential revenue streams," the report said.

During the review period, the BSP said there were 38 operating universal and commercial banks with 4,259 branches, 83 thrift banks with 1,250 branches and 737 rural and cooperative banks with 1,371 branches at end-June 2007.

The BSP said the banking system's solvency ratio remained well above its requirement of 10 percent and the international standard of 8 percent on account of increased capital-raising activities of banks as part of their preparations for the Basle 2 capital adequacy requirement.

Core earnings in the first semester remained strong, the BSP reported, as net income after tax rose by 17.6 percent to P32.8 billion from 14.6 percent in the same period last year.

Nissan seen boosting RP, India operations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CHIBA CITY, JAPAN—AUTO maker Nissan is ramping up its Philippine facilities amid a global thrust to build vehicles aimed at lower-income markets in Asia and rest of the world, company officials said.

Andy Palmer, Nissan Motor Co. Ltd. corporate vide president, said in an interview that the firm's successful programs in the Philippines was being tried out in other parts of the world, especially as it attempts to rebuild its light commercial vehicle business.

"In 2002, we were almost out of the LCV business and (since then) we have been working to rebuild our business globally," said Palmer, who is responsible for Nissan's LCV business unit.

"We want to get stronger in some countries that we are not strong enough. In Asia, we have on our radar India and other growing markets like the Philippines," he added.

Palmer said Nissan was developing new vehicles, like the NV 200 van, which if and when it comes into fruition would most likely end up in the Philippine market.

"We are currently working with Elizabeth Lee [Universal Motors Corp. executive vice president] in the Philippines and also with out partners in Thailand to set up a proper business unit structure for LCVs in Asean," Palmer said.

UMC, one of Nissan's two Philippine units, is focused on pick-ups and vans while Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. is into the assembly of passenger cars.

"(Our Asean plans represent) a clear intent to do more than what we are doing now both in the production and marketing aspects," Palmer said.

The Tokyo-based official cited UMC's marketing approach of positioning the Urvan as a multipurpose vehicle that middle income buyers, like the families of overseas Filipino workers, could use for small businesses.

"We are replicating globally what (Lee) has been doing in the Philippines and UMC is a kind of benchmark," Palmer said.

Palmer said he was keeping tabs on the Philippines considering that, with a population of at least 80 million and its recent economic growth of about 7-percent, presented a big market potential.

"Usually, when the economy is growing at that rate, people are buying more LCVs which you need to make money," he said.

In a separate interview, Colin Dodge, Nissan senior vice president for global overseas markets, said Nissan's production plants in Laguna have "a very bright prospect."

"We intend to develop the competitiveness of (the Philippine) plants from good to very, very good," Dodge said. "The Philippines is today one of our LCV manufacturing bases in the world."

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap injects "Aratra" (pesticide) into a coconut tree as he leads efforts of the department to combat coconut pests and control the spread of the coconut leaf beetle (scientifically known as Brontispa longgissima gestro) in one of the *barangays* in Panglao, Bohol. The department said the proper inoculation procedure would address the problem in infested sites and insulate the uninfected coconut trees.

Banks' bad loans up slightly in Aug.

THE BANKS' BAD LOANS-TO-TOTAL LOANS ratio inched up to 5.28 percent in August from the post-Asian crisis low of 5.18 percent in July, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

The BSP said this was due to the decline in the sector's total loan portfolio.

The sector's nonperforming loans (NPL) increased by 0.87 percent over a month ago to hit P103.25 billion in August while its total loan portfolio slowed down by 1.03 percent to P1.95 trillion.

The NPL ratio in August showed an improvement from the 7.2 percent in the same month last year. It is also close to the average of 3-4 percent seen before the Asian currency crisis of 1997.

The commercial banking system's stock of bad loans peaked, in terms of its ratio to total loans, at 18.81 percent in October 2001 as many corporate borrowers defaulted on their debts while banks turned cautious in providing new loans.

In the meantime, the sector's real and other properties acquired (Ropa) went up to 3.59 percent of gross assets from the previous month's ratio of 3.56 percent. The total amount of Ropa was placed at P158.64 billion.

The sector's nonperforming assets—NPLs and Ropas combined—rose to 5.7 percent from 5.63 percent in previous month but eased from 7.63 percent in the same period last year.

Banks are expected to unload soured loans in bulk in the coming months as the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Law would expire in April next year. *Doris C. Dumlao*

DA eyes partnership with Del Monte

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IS in talks with Del Monte Philippines for a possible partnership for the supply of cattle meat to the DA's *bagsakan* centers and barangay food terminals in Metro Manila.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said the DA was asking the company to supply these retail outlets premium cut meat products.

Bagsakan centers and BFTs sell basic food items—including rice, meat and vegetables—at prices about 12 percent lower than their regular retail prices.

Del Monte has expressed support for the DA's campaign to bring agricultural products from the provinces, particularly in Mindanao, directly to markets in Metro Manila.

According to Del Monte plantation manager Bunnie Jaranilla, Del Monte is now studying the terms of the arrangement and its costing, considering that it imports its cattle.

"The initial plan is to supply a minimum of four tons of carcass a week to selected *bagsakan* centers and BFTs," Jaranilla said.

According to Jaranilla, Del Monte is shipping to Manila about 400 heads of live cattle a month.

Under the proposed tie-up, both parties have agreed to have the meat vacuum packed and shipped via refrigerated vans and cold chain facilities.

Yap said he believed that this partnership with Del Monte would help bring down the prices of meat products in Mega and Metro Manila.

Bagsakan centers and BFTs provide farmers with direct access or link to wet markets and consumers, and would help farmers earn more.

This link could eliminate unnecessary trading layers that jack up prices of agricultural produce and cut profits of small farmers and fisherfolk.

The DA has been putting up these centers in strategic locations across the country to help address the pressing problems on hunger and poverty.

Yap said BFTs had been set up in Quezon City, Manila, Taguig, Pasay City, Bulacan and Caloocan.

Bagsakan centers have been established in Valenzuela, Quezon City, Marikina, Pasig, Muntinlupa, Cavite and Manila. *Amy R. Remo*

CORPORATE ROUNDUP

Meralco nets P2.8B in 9 months

MANILA ELECTRIC CO. POSTED A NET INCOME OF P480 MILlion in the third quarter, boosting profits in the first nine months to P2.8 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Meralco said its third-quarter net income was 101 percent higher than the P229 million in the same period last year. The nine-month profit this year was 370 percent higher than year-ago level.

Revenue rose 15.5 percent to P155.89 billion in the first nine months. Of the amount, Meralco said P8.75 billion had yet to be billed to customers.

In the third quarter, Meralco registered volume sales of 6,822 gigawatt-hours (GWh), 6 percent higher than year-ago level. *Abigail L. Ho*

Smart's 'Coastline Roaming'

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. HAS TIED UP WITH FOREIGN telecom firms to offer mobile roaming connectivity on board cruise ships and luxury ferries worldwide.

The service, called Coastline Roaming, allows postpaid and prepaid Smart subscribers to send and receive calls and text messages on select cruise ships and liners without having to change their phone numbers or handsets.

In a statement, Smart said it was the first Philippine telco to offer this service. Its foreign partners for the service are AT&T (Cingular) of the United States; Telecom Italia, Italy, and Manx Maritime, Isle of Man and Maritime Communications Partner (MCP), Norway. OceanCell of Iceland is another upcoming partner.

Services using coastline roaming follow the same billing principles as regular land-based roaming. *Riza T. Olchondra*

ATSC ferry unit gets P28M

INTER-ISLAND FERRY SUPERCAT FAST FERRY CORP. IS SET TO get a capital infusion of P28 million from parent firm Aboitiz Transport System Corp. through a sale of shares.

ATSC's board has approved the subscription to an additional 140,000 common shares of SFFC. The acquisition will increase its ownership of SFFC from 20,000 to 160,000 common shares.

Last month, ATSC bought SFFC for P13.7 million from its affiliate Accuria.

"The acquisition is part of our strategy of integrating all the Aboitiz interests in the transport and logistics industry under ATS. The consolidation of its transport related businesses aims to enhance the synergy of the group," ATSC earlier said. *Riza T. Olchondra*

Brittany earmarks P1.2B for 2nd condo project

INSPIRED BY THE SUCCESS OF MOSAIC, a designer condo launched late last year, real estate developer Brittany Corp. adds a second development in Makati worth about P1.2 billion to its portfolio.

In partnership with the Kalaw-Ledesma family, Brittany launches KL Mosaic, a high-rise residential condominium that will marry art and architecture to enrich vertical living.

Vista Land president and CEO Jing Serrano said the warm market reception to Brittany's first project prompted the company to start KL Mosaic. The company, Serrano said, takes the new project on a higher creative plane as shown in its collaboration with the Kalaw-Ledesmas.

The 32-storey residential condominium set to be completed in 2012 will house a gallery that residents and art patrons can enjoy. The gallery will occupy two levels and will exhibit the rare and priceless Kalaw-Ledesma art collection. It will also showcase the works of today's young and promising artists.

As with Brittany's creative 'lifescapes' like Portofino, CrossWinds and Georgia Club, KL Mosaic is a fusion of ideas coming from the best disciplines in the industry.

It sits across Legaspi Park, so despite being surrounded by bustling urbanity, nature abound and in full view from the roomy balcony. It is also conveniently located at the heart of Makati's shopping and business district.

Inside KL Mosaic, spaces are designed to let air circulate freely. It is also replete with exceptional amenities to satisfy the needs and wants of unit owners, from expats and investors to small families and young urban professionals.

Two firms seeking CNG accreditation

By Abigail L. Ho

TWO FOREIGN INVESTORS-BACKED groups are seeking accreditation from the Department of Energy to put up facilities that will offer compressed natural gas (CNG) to motorists.

Mario Marasigan, energy utilization and management director of the DOE, said Synergy International Resources Group Co. Ltd. and Callandra LCNG Fuels Corp. had pending applications for accreditation.

"Their applications are still being processed. We still have to see their plans and their finances. We've asked for all the necessary documents from them so that we can properly evaluate them," he said.

The Shell Companies in the Philippines last week started the commercial run of its "mother" CNG station in Tabangao, Batangas and its "daughter" CNG refilling station along the South Luzon Expressway in Binan, Laguna.

The natural gas is extracted from the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project in offshore Palawan, transported to the mother station for compression, and transported again, this time as CNG, to the daughter station.

The start of the commercial operation of the CNG mother-daughter stations means that the first 22 CNG-fed buses in the country can now start plying the Laguna-Cubao/Lawton and Batangas-Cubao/Lawton routes.

These CNG-fed buses would be enjoying a more than 50-percent cut in fuel costs, as CNG to be sold by Shell was priced at only P14.52 a liter.

The operation of Shell's mother-daughter stations forms part of the government's Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT), a seven-year pilot program that will peg the price of CNG at P14.52 a liter, less than half the price of diesel, for participating bus operators.

The DOE expects 200 CNG-fed buses to be delivered to the country, 185 of which have already been allotted to accredited bus firms.

The accredited bus operators and their allocations include HM Transport Inc., 80 units; KL Transport, 40 units; RRCG Transport and Pascual Liner Inc., 20 units each; Greenstar Express Inc. and CNG Vehicles Corp., 10 units each, and BBL Transport System Inc., five units.

Marasigan said the seven-year NGVPPT "will determine the economic viability of using CNG for public transport."

"We need to see around 2,000 buses by the time the program ends," he said.

ABM 14TH ANNIVERSARY

COMPUTECH ENTERPRISES, INC.

"Total Commitment, Excellent Performance for Business Innovation"

CELEBRATING 14 YEARS OF COMMITMENT, EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

August 23, 2007 marked ABM Computech Enterprises' 14th year of delivering total commitment, excellent performance and business innovations to the Philippine business solutions and consulting industry. This milestone was celebrated with a special anniversary event entitled "ABM at Teatrino: A Thanksgiving Concert and Awards Night" held at Teatrino, Greenhills. The main purpose of the event was to give special appreciation and recognition to partners, clients and employees alike, who have given and shown unending trust and support to ABM and its operations. The highlights included a special awarding ceremony and exciting musical performances by international renowned artists. The celebration was well-attended by ABM's local and global partners, customers and pool of employees.

1993 is the year that ABM began its drive to become a major provider of business software solutions carrying Platinum Accounting Software. ABM's thriving track record with Platinum Accounting Software fueled the addition of leading world-class business solutions to ABM's roster of products. Over the years, ABM has continued to create multi-solutions for the growing demands of every enterprise – from small and medium enterprises to organizations belonging to the Philippines' top 1,000 corporations.

As confirmation to ABM's growth and success in the industry are the numerous awards given by its global partners. Among it are Highest Annual Growth and International Sales Achievement Award from Epicor Software Corporation; Top Platinum International Distributor, Outstanding Sales Achievement- Asia, Highest Annual Revenue and Best International Sales Award and Outstanding Business Growth, Asia from Sage Software. On top of these, ABM won the National Consumers Excellence Award and was titled Outstanding Provider of Business Software Solutions, an award which is considered a trademark of quality and innovation in the Philippines.

Today, ABM's pioneering efforts have resulted to the growth of more and more businesses that undeniably contributes to economic recovery and nation building. It has sustained its growth and reinforced its proficiency in implementing solutions to various industries. With the successful completion of consulting and sales certifications of the best business solutions in the world namely BatchMaster Enterprise, e by EPICOR, Fourth Shift Edition, Manhattan Associates' Supply Chain Management, Microsoft Dynamics, Sage ACCPAC ERP, Sage MAS500, and SAP Business One, ABM has become the ultimate business enabler and strategic partner of successful companies. It has served over 700 local and international clients and has deployed consulting and programming teams to some well-known companies abroad in places such as Australia, Guam, California, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea.

Now known as the one-stop-shop for world-class business software solutions with strategic backing from BayanTrade, ABM has strengthened its hold of leadership in the market and is continuing to deliver the highest quality of service to its valued clients. It has a vision and great direction for the future and will continue to support and promote the Philippine business community in achieving world-class systems and operations through leading automated business technology applications for many more years to come.

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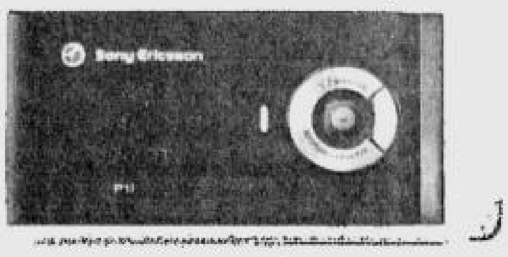


Sony Ericsson breaks ground with P1i

By Riza T. Olchondra

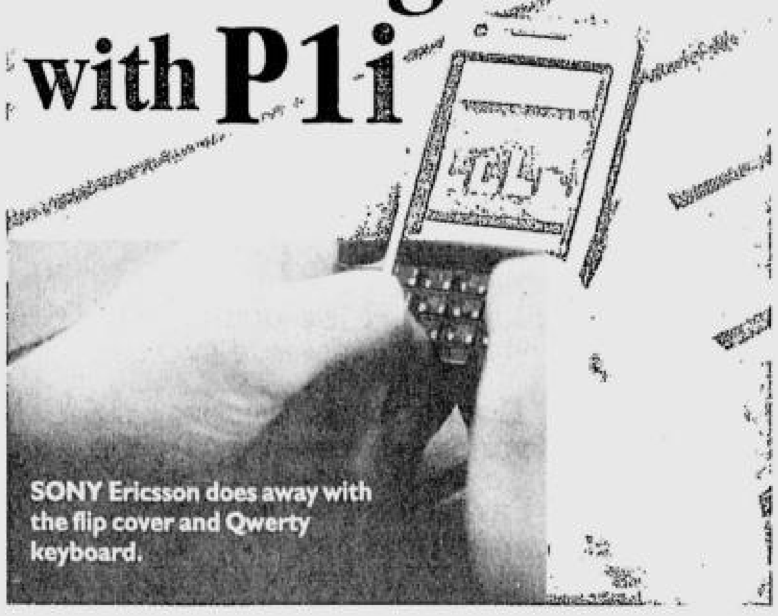
TIRED OF SONY ERICSSON'S form factor for the P series?

If you are, you can heave a sigh of relief for the P1i has broken away with tradition, disposing of the characteristic "flip" cover and ditching the full QWERTY keyboard for a compact version that is similar to the M600i.

Simple moves, but they make a world of difference.

In addition to enabling easier key-ins, the absence of a flip cover on this 3G Symbian smartphone sets off the keypad against the silver casing. The dedicated "back" button on the left side of the unit helps when you change your mind about an application or picture. The keys take some getting used to, but once you do, are a breeze to use.

Notably, the P1i screen is easier on the eyes. Not only is the TFT display large at 2.6 inches, it has a transflective panel, which means that it can be read more easily outdoors than other screens in the P series. Sony Ericsson kept the touchscreen technology and added a jog-dial control that allows one-touch access to applications like menu, games and multimedia, which is just nifty.



SONY Ericsson does away with the flip cover and Qwerty keyboard.

At the back is a 3.2-megapixel camera with auto focus and flash, and there's a secondary video camera up front for video calling.

There's also a multimedia player and FM radio. The 160MB of internal memory can be expanded by using a Memory Stick Micro card.

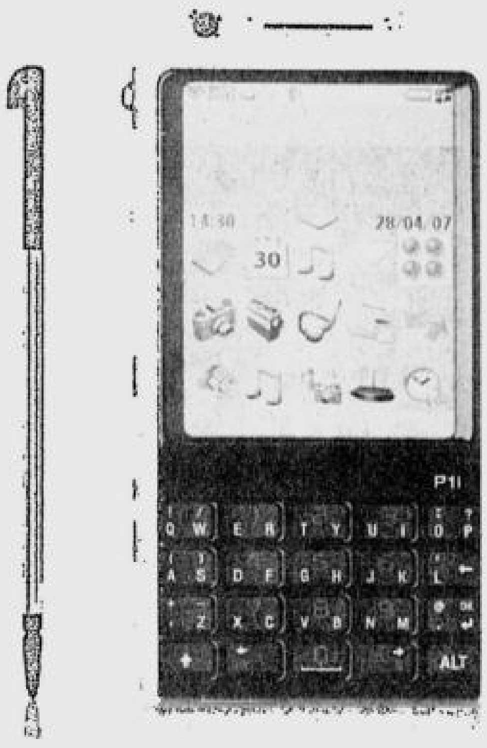
For connectivity, this tri-band device supports 802.11b and 802.11g WiFi, and of course, Bluetooth. But just like the rest of the P series, the P1i doesn't support HSDPA.

The P1i is also a wee bit lighter than the P990i, weighing in at 124 grams in contrast to its predecessor's 150g.

Functionally, the P1i runs the usual set of P990 applications, including personal information management software and Web browser.

As with all handsets, using Bluetooth and WiFi will eat into the battery life significantly, although hopefully not as quickly as it did on the P990.

All in all, the P1i makes good use of its rich heritage following the P990 and M600.



THE P1i screen is easier on the eyes.

Nokia set to hit high note with music-driven phones

ANOTHER SET OF MUSIC-DRIVEN phones is set to take the market by storm after Nokia's NSeries, this time positioning handsets as replacements for music devices.

"Traditionally the Nokia handset was built as a phone first and as a music device second. This is the first time that the music came first, and then the phone," Nokia Philippines general manager William Hamilton-Whyte said at the launching ceremony last Friday.

"Nokia has seen that music plays as big a part in the life of every Filipino as well as the mobile phone. People do not want a separate device for a phone, a music player, even for a camera and the Internet. So we put these together in one device."

Headlining Nokia's foray into the music business are the 5310 XpressMusic and the 5610 Xpress Music devices. The handsets feature dedicated music keys for easy access to playlists without closing other functions, such as "texting" and browsing.

Accessibility is nothing if you don't have any space for music, so the 5310 was built to hold up to 1,500 tracks on a 2GB microSD card and 3,000 tracks on an optional 4GB card. It also has a 2 megapixel camera, making it easier than ever to carry a single device for music and communication.

The 5610 packs more memory, capable of storing up to 3,000 songs on a 4GB microSD card and has a 3.2 megapixel camera to boot.

Other music-driven phones introduced by Nokia to the local market were the N81, the N81 8GB and the N95 8GB.

The N81 and N81 8GB can store up to 6,000 high-quality stereo songs with music playback of up to 22 hours, while the N95 8GB offers up to 20 hours of video or up to 6,000 songs on its luminous 2.8-inch screen.

With dedicated music and gaming keys, 3.5mm headphone connector and 3G and WLAN connectivity, the N81 and its beefed up brother the N81 8GB are mobile entertainment powerhouses. The two are also configured to find, buy, manage and play music and games from the Nokia Music Store and N-Gage games service.

In the meantime, the N95, which Nokia prefers to call a "multimedia computer," has been jazzed up. Nokia kept all the key features, including a 5 megapixel camera with Carl Zeiss optics, built-in A-GPS for using maps to navigate, WLAN, HSDPA and an innovative two-way slide. But the N95 8GB, as the name implies, offers massive memory and great viewing on a luminous 2.8-inch screen.

Nokia's new wave of music-capable phones will be available in all Nokia Stores nationwide. Whyte said the company would be developing a larger distribution landscape through its own stores and partner-distributors. From 21 stores, including one in Dagupan City, Nokia is adding one in Southmall, one in Ayala-Cebu and one in Megamall.

Taking mobile phone care a step further, Nokia is soon to launch its Nokia Care Mobile Van.

Going forward, Whyte says music will continue to be at the forefront of Nokia Philippines' campaigns in the coming months.

Nokia is a world leader in mobile communications accounting for about one-third of the global market. There are about three billion mobile users all over the world 900 million of whom are using Nokia devices.

Riza T. Olchondra

Traveling in style with Acer

TRAVELING IN STYLE, ESPECIALL' TH your PC, is a must in these high-tech times.

And the best possible travel companion one can have is an Acer TravelMate notebook, recently introduced by Acer Philippines Inc. for the so-called "telecommuters."

The Acer TravelMate laptop series feature top-of-the-line TravelMate 6292-301G16 and the 6291-101G16, which are powered by Intel Core 2 Duo T7300 processor with Intel 965GM Express chipset.

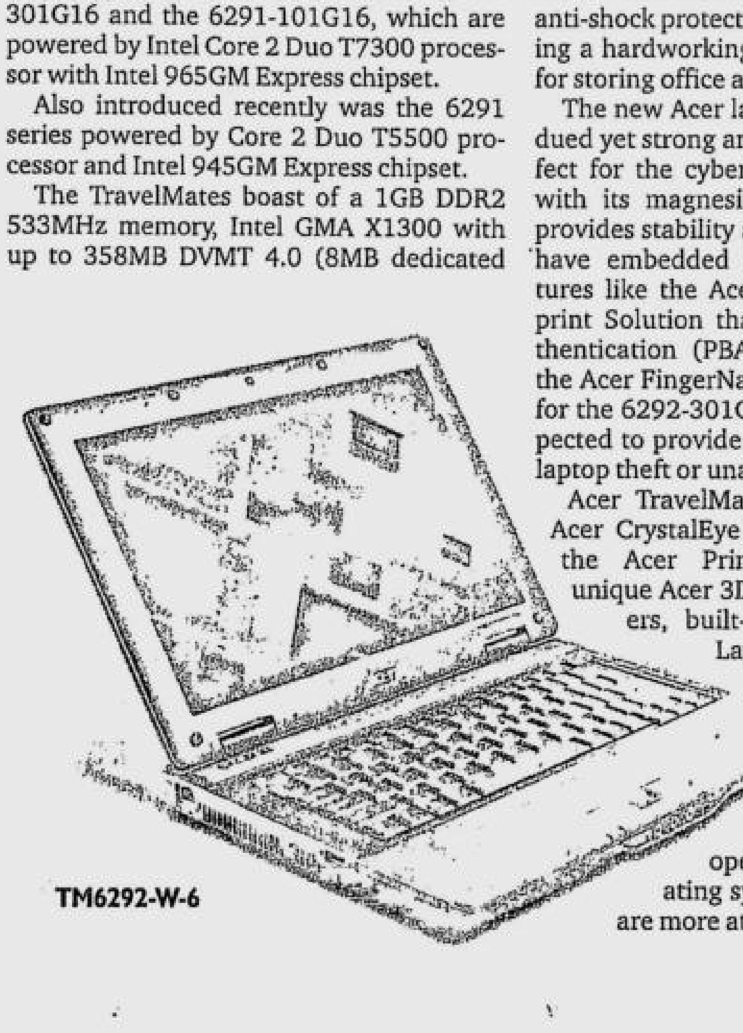
Also introduced recently was the 6291 series powered by Core 2 Duo T5500 processor and Intel 945GM Express chipset.

The TravelMates boast of a 1GB DDR2 533MHz memory, Intel GMA X1300 with up to 358MB DVMT 4.0 (8MB dedicated memory and 350MB shared memory) for sharper video clips and photo images on a 12.1-inch WXGA CrystalBrite TFT LCD screen—best for office presentations and online games.

Acer TravelMate 6292-301G16 and the 6291-101G16 carry 160GB SATA hard drives, while the 6291-100512 has a 120GB SATA hard drive. They all have disc anti-shock protection capability, guaranteeing a hardworking and durable hard drive for storing office and personal files.

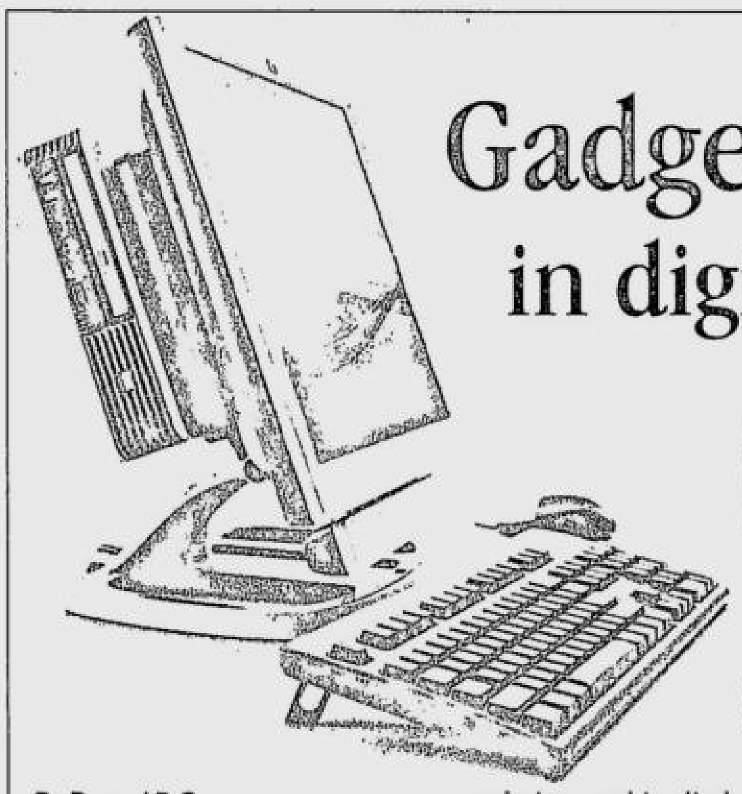
The new Acer laptops display sleek, subdued yet strong and masculine appeal, perfect for the cyber road warrior executive with its magnesium alloy structure that provides stability and protection. The units have embedded security protection features like the Acer Bio-Protection Fingerprint Solution that features Pre-Boot Authentication (PBA) Computer Protection, the Acer FingerNav and Acer Fingerlaunch for the 6292-301G16 model, which are expected to provide peace of mind in case of laptop theft or unauthorized use.

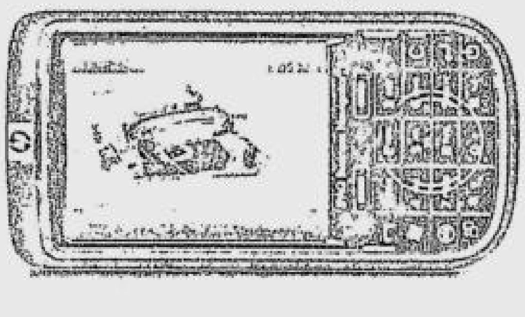
Acer TravelMate models have built-in Acer CrystalEye Web cams that support the Acer PrimaLite technology, the unique Acer 3D Surround Sound speakers, built-in Super Multi Double Layer optical drives, and the exciting Windows Vista Home Premium operating system. TravelMate 6291-100512 has the open-standard Linux operating system for executives who are more at home with this system.



TM6292-W-6

Gadgets Star in digital banquet





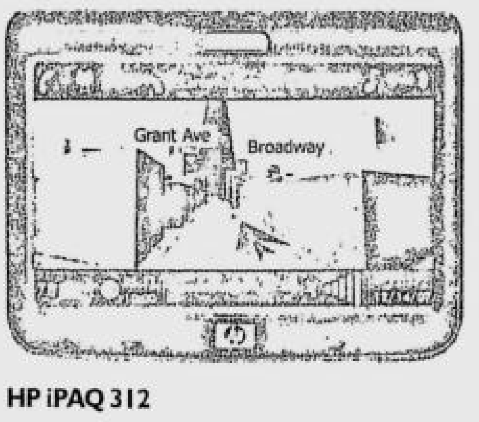
HP Compaq DC7800 ultraslim (left), and the HP iPAQ 612 (top)

By Raquel P. Gomez

THE NEXT GENERATION OF gadgets and computing devices that will expand and further consume our wired, wireless and virtual world were presented in a "digital products banquet" prepared by HP for the Asia Pacific press event held at Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

The global IT company known for printers, desktops, notebooks, servers and handheld devices unveiled the latest products and solutions "tailored for the small and medium businesses" across the region.

Techies and gadget aficionados had their first glimpse of PCs specially designed for the tough Asian environment, printers that don't engage in long start-up but print right away, notebooks that have indestructible solid state drives, PDA phones and handheld devices that have navigation or GPS features, and affordable power-efficient work stations for heavy graphics users.



HP iPAQ 312

"HP is announcing the latest suite of products for SMBs (small and medium businesses) in Asia Pacific to demonstrate how, in a rapidly growing market, we can help them derive the most value from their IT investments, accelerate business performance and reach new business frontiers," said Adrian Koch, senior vice president personal systems group, HP Asia Pacific and Japan.

With the aim of helping enterprises in Asia Pacific to improve productivity and lower costs of doing business, HP introduced a range of desktop products that include the HP Compaq dc7800 Ultra-slim desktop PC, which features a "sleek, zero-footprint design," or a design that allows for the small lightweight PC box to be concealed behind the LCD monitor.

With starting prices below $800, HP's xw4550 workstation features energy-efficient AMD Opteron processors (Intel Core Duo processor counterpart) with 2D and 3D graphics technologies that makes it capable of driving multiple high-resolution graphics displays on several LCD monitors.

The HP xw4600, on the other hand, either comes packed with Intel Pentium Dual Core, Intel Core 2 Duo, or Intel Core 2 Extreme dual-and-quad core processors along with Intel X38 Express Chipset, a memory controller hub architecture that optimizes memory and graphics. Installed video accelerators, like NVIDIA, PCle X16, or ATI graphics support high performance 3D graphic displays. For connectivity to other devices, the workstation also features 12 USB ports and 6 SATA interfaces.

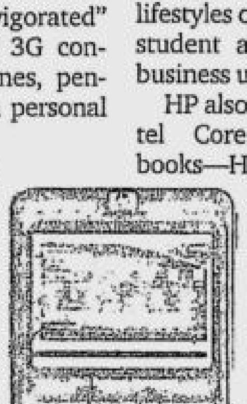
HP workstations all possess a "tool-less" chassis design, where internal components of the PC can be accessed easily for servicing without having to "unscrew" them out.

Koch said the company also came out with products specially designed for particular Asian markets, like PCs that can withstand the tough transportation environment in India and entry level PCs for schools in China.

HP re-enters the tough market of handhelds in Asia with the introduction of five new "reinvigorated" iPAQ devices—a pair of 3G converged PDA mobile phones, pen-based PDAs, as well as a personal navigation device.

Positioned as a necessary business communications tool for professionals, the new iPAQs run on Windows Mobile 6 packed with all the office software essentials. It has a Wi-Fi feature, as well as GPS navigation and HP Enterprise Mobility Suite (EMS).

The EMS allows for easy setup and diagnosis. It has a software update, locking and content wipe out features that may be done outright on the device or through a website via text messaging. So if you lose the device, you can actually make it "unusable" for the "new" owner.



HP iPAQ 912

The 3G-enabled HP iPAQ 912 Business Messenger with full QWERTY thumb keyboard, and HP iPAQ 612 Business Navigator boast of 3-megapixel cameras and bright touch screens.

Offering mobile e-mail, voice and GPS navigation, both PDA handhelds allow users to conduct calls and access the Internet in places around the world via the 3G HSDPA and Quad-band (GSM/GPRS/EDGE) technologies. The handhelds' integrated Wi-Fi not only allows for hot spot connectivity for surfing the Web, but also VoIP for Internet calls.

Featuring a high-definition 3D navigation system, the HP iPAQ 312 Travel Companion is a useful device that guides and entertains a user literally out of the box, while helping him or her stay organized at the same time. It can run Google maps and helps users find the exact address, URL and phone number of a location.

Traveling professionals will also appreciate the long battery life and turn-by-turn navigation via the Assisted GPS feature of the new iPAQS. Also, the voice commander feature called the Voice Reply allows for hands- and eyes-free reading and response to e-mails.

"This unprecedented expansion of iPAQ products marks a new chapter for HP and demonstrates HP's dedication to the mobile space," says Dave Rothschild, Handheld Global Business Unit, Personal Systems Group, HP. "Today's broad range of iPAQs suit the lifestyles of the mobile professional, student and adventure junkie to business users."

HP also introduced three new Intel Core Duo business notebooks—HP Compaq 2710p, HP Compaq 2510p and HP Compaq 6910p—with tag prices ranging from $649 to $699. All three feature 64-gigabyte flash-based solid state drives.

This is the first time the company commercially rolled out notebooks with solid state drives. Solid state drives are proven to be shock-resistant making notebooks more reliable, power efficient, and perform better.

With a renewed focus on Asia Pacific, particularly the growing businesses of the region, HP is intent on delivering, simplifying and adapting its portfolio of products for the Asian consumers and emerging businesses, according to Koch.

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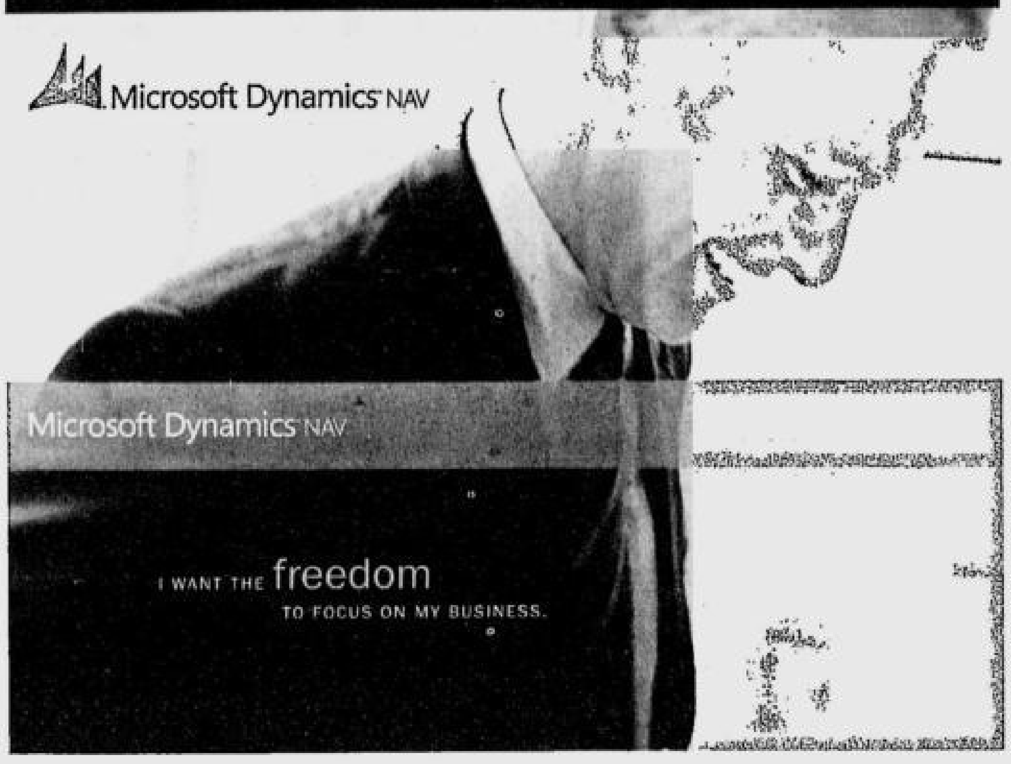

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To know more about Microsoft Dynamics NAV, you may visit www.microsoft.com/dynamics, or call ABM at (632) 810-8115 loc. 232 to schedule a meeting or product demonstration.

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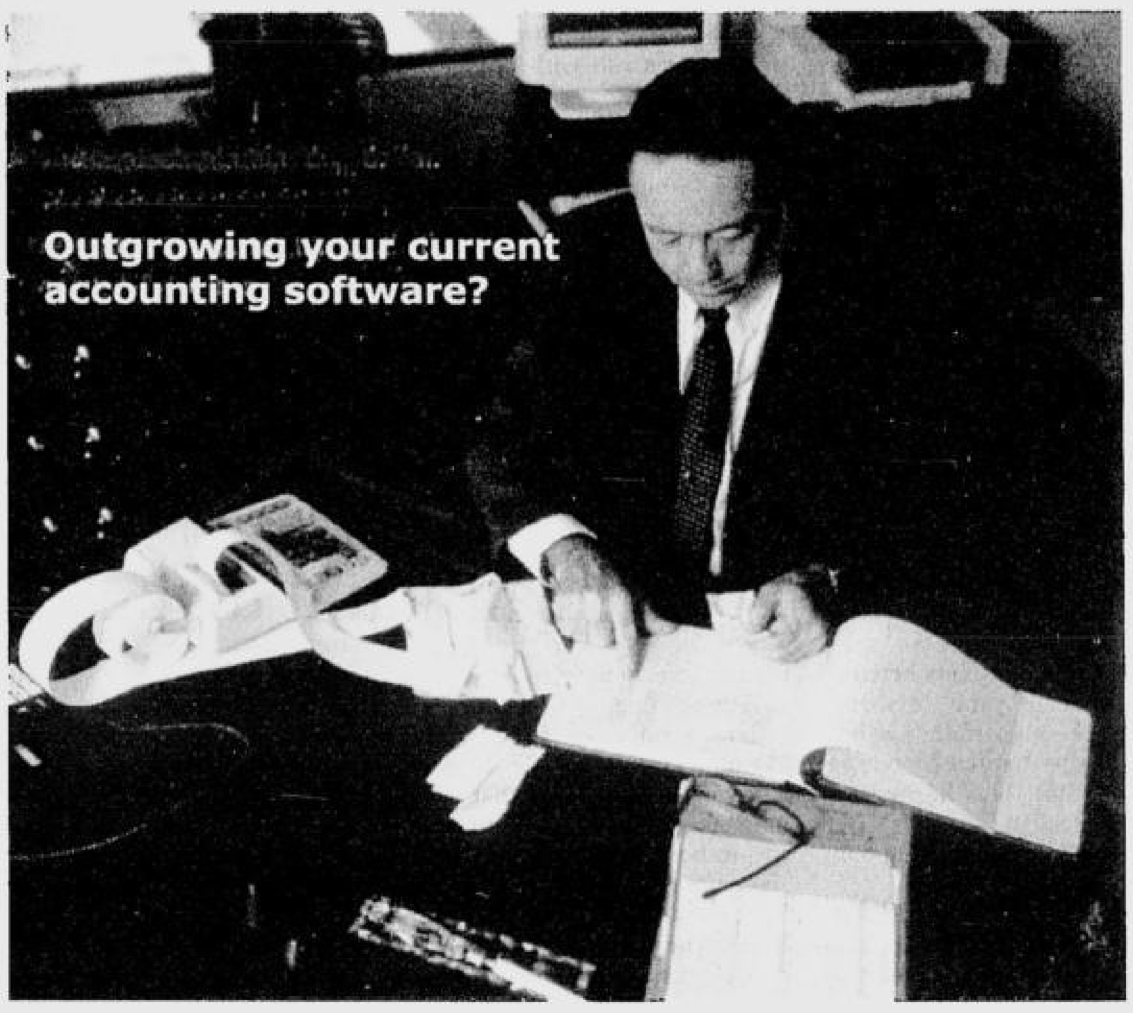
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Philconstruct '07: The world's best under one roof

PHILCONSTRUCT 2007, THE 17TH Philippine International Construction Equipment & Building Materials Exhibition & Technology Forum incorporating Modern Home Expo '07, 4th International Interiors, Furnishing & Furniture, Lighting, Home Entertainment & Total Lifestyle Exhibition, is set to be staged this Nov. 15 to 18 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila.

With the show's track record and consistent positive feedback from exhibitors about the performance of the expo in expanding their business network and generating volume business for their construction and building products and services, this year's event is expected to attract over 500 exhibitors from around the world and is estimated to have total displays of 700 booths. It also expects to host over 50,000 trade buyers from all over the country and around the region in four days, making it the biggest and most important event in the country.

The Philippine Constructors Association (PCA), representing the biggest and most influential construction companies that serve as agents of change for the improvement of standards and practices in the industry, is behind Philconstruct 2007. With the association's members taking the lead in taking on major undertakings on various infrastructure projects of the government as well as private developments and international projects, taken as a whole, the group has been reputed to be the biggest buyers and specifiers of building and construction materials in the country and is able to provide volume business to suppliers and manufacturers.

With the increasing number of vital private and government projects, infrastructure developments, housing, influx of foreign remittance and trade and commercial developments in the pipeline, the Philippine Constructors Association's is even more driven to ensure that the foundation for steady supply of quality and cost efficient materials remains available and technologically advanced for the local industry to remain globally competitive. This is the driving force behind the annual staging of Philconstruct, which was created to be a neutral business forum for the entire industry.

Showcase of technology

"As the event chair, my committee members and I are committed to put together the best possible showcase of technology, products and services available in the world market for our local industry players. Being in the industry for over several decades now, I am aware of the needs and directions that our local construction industry must undertake to remain competitive. In the upcoming Philconstruct 2007, many of these issues will surely be addressed." said Eric Cruz, event chair and PCA vice president.

This year, aside from the much talked about Estilo de Vida Interior Design competition (where junior year students of interior design schools compete for the top three interior designs of a 48 sqm condominium unit and which will be built up and showcased at Philconstruct) and is co-organized by the Philippine Institute for Interior Design (PIID), a special Mining Pavilion titled Mining Philippines 2007 is going to be held coinciding with the event. The PCA and the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) has tied up to put together various local and international suppliers that will be able to cater to both the construction and mining industry which today is another billion-dollar industry. This move has further strengthened and emphasized that working hand in hand with other industries opens up more business opportunities for everyone and expands one's network.

Philconstruct can be proud that it is the only show that attracts key decision makers in every link of the buying chain. This includes 2,400-plus architects and designers, over 3,700 contractors and sub-contractors, including other primary and secondary contractors/dealers, more than 2,380 engineers, architectural and design/build firms, over 910 facility managers including wholesalers, distributors, importers, exporters, more than 1,400 distributors, more than 3,100 manufacturers' reps, including manufacturers' agents/representatives and resellers, over 9,700 home owners, and more than 1,800 exhibitor personnel.

With the attendance of the biggest and top construction executives who sit in the PCA board, combined with the support and participation of leading construction related associations, organizations, architects, designers, engineers and local government makes Philconstruct a truly comprehensive marketplace where new products and technology are introduced, partnerships are formed and business is made profitable.

The event is professionally managed by one of the country's top trade event organizer Global-Link MP Events International Inc. For more information on Philconstruct, call 750-8588/887-1304, fax 750-8585, or e-mail info@globallinkph.com.

"We provide the business platform by using Philconstruct as the annual event for industry leaders to explore business opportunities, generate new sales leads, improving product capabilities, establish partnerships and other marketing opportunities. This is the key to the success of this project and we intend to make it even bigger and better in the coming years," says Jorge Consunji, president, PCA.

Some of the major show sponsors and participants are: Artes Myer, Bisazza, Boysen, Carlson Trading, Cemex, Cobankiat Hardware, Davies Paints, Flowcrete, Ford Philippines, Holcim Philippines, Industrial Surface, Infratex, Lafarge, JAC, Lexton Commercial, Manila Sources, Mariwasa, Maxima/Komatsu, Mega Systems, Monark Equipment, Multistiq, Norde International, Panasonic, Pars Builders, Power Systems, Puyat Steel, Robert Bosch, and Wilcon Builders.

VILLAR OPENS PHILCONSTRUCT
Upon his arrival, Senate President Manny Villar was welcomed by Global-Link MP managing director Patrick Lawrence Tan, PCA president Jorge Consunji and PCA vice-president John Bautista. Up to 2,854 delegates attended the opening ceremony at World Trade Center.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Negros Oriental
CITY OF BAYAWAN
SPECIALIZED BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
www.bayawancity.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Bayawan, through its Specialized Bids and Awards Committee, invites prospective suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid:

Bid Number	Name of Project/s	Approved Budget for the Contract	Source of Fund
07-185B	Air conditioning System (Integrated Bus Terminal (Phase III))	P2,157,856.72	General Fund
07-186B	Materials for the completion of Integrated Bus Terminal	P2,837,110.00	General Fund

Project Location/Delivery Area — Bayawan City Warehouse
Contract Duration — 12 working days upon receipt of Purchase Order

The complete schedules of bidding activities are as follows

ACTIVITY	DATE/S
Advertisement/Posting of the Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid	October 29, 2007
Issuance of Bid Documents	October 29, 2007
Pre-bid Conference	November 6, 2007 (10:00 a.m.)
Deadline for the submission & Opening of Eligibility Requirements (for Non-Accredited Suppliers) & LOI for Accredited Suppliers (Specialized BAC Office)	November 19, 2007 (10:00 a.m.)
Deadline/Opening of Bids (Specialized BAC Office)	November 19, 2007 (1:30 p.m.)

Complete sets of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents will be available for issuance at the Specialized BAC Office, 2nd Floor, City Hall Bldg., Bayawan City (Tel. No. (035) 531-0800) upon payment of the prescribed non-refundable fee

Prospective Bidders shall duly accomplish eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals and submit the same in 2 (two) separate sealed envelopes on or before the date indicated above

The Specialized Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to accept or reject all bids or part thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids considered most advantageous to the City Government of Bayawan.

(Sgd.) PANCHO F. VILLASIS
Chairman, Specialized Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI – Oct. 29, 2007)

Development Bank of the Philippines
Marbel Branch
Alunan Avenue, Koronadal City

NOTICE TO ALL ELIGIBLE BIDDERS

Please be informed that the deadline for the submission of Bids for the Construction of New DBP Marbel Branch Building is moved from October 29, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. to November 5, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at DBP Marbel Branch, Alunan Avenue, General Santos City on or before 10:00 a.m. of November 5, 2007. Bid opening shall be at 2:00 p.m. of November 5, 2007 at DBP, Marbel Branch, Alunan Avenue, Koronadal City.

(Sgd.) **ELVIE N. EULLARAN-ALBANO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI- October 22 & 29, 2007)

REWARD

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is given to the public that Writs of Execution have been issued against the following persons who are all previous tenants of **GREENHILLS SHOPPESVILLE ARCADE**, San Juan City by the Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 57, San Juan, Metro Manila:

Name of Defendant	Civil Case No.	Last Known Address
ABELLERA, Josephine J.	9124	11 Guyabano St., Proj. 2, QC
APOLONIO, Rosauro	9010	Brgy. Lumang Bayan, Plaridel, Bulacan
BALTAZAR, Ma. Luz	9150	51 Umbel St., Roxas District, QC
BARIN, Magnolia	9164	47 Dumalay St., Sta. Monica, Novaliches, QC
BLANCO, Jasmin F.	9155	Unit 0, Hemady Townhomes, New Manila, QC
BLANCO, Russel	9148	Unit 0, Hemady Townhomes, New Manila, QC
CASTANEDA, Ma. Carla V.	9033	8843 Sampaloc St., San Antonio Village, Makati City
CATALAN, Mayorico P.	9236	3 Pag-asa St., San Jose, QC
DESCALLAR, Michelle	9171	Batangueno Vill., Matina Aplaya, Davao City
DONA, Saturnino, Jr. C.	9163	1903 Tramo St., Pasay City
FAUSTINO, Lina V.	9170	Unit 0, Hemady Townhomes, New Manila, QC
HERNANDEZ, Mary Ann F.	9038	605 Rosita St., Sto. Nino, Marikina City
JAURIGUE, Ma. Teresa D.	9005	Unit 229, Kaimitoville, Kaimito St., Valle Verde 2, Pasig City
LOPEZ, Aileen A.	9009	Manila Steam Laundry, 2223 España St., Sampaloc, Manila
LUCIANO, Maura I.	9153	48 Samar Ave. cor Albano St., South Triangle, QC
MACEDA, Anna Gisel R.	9008	56 Highland Drive, Blue Ridge, QC
MANGUBAT, Leopoldo	9035	372 Columbia St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
MARALIT, Ariel P.	9014	3 Don Pepe St., Sta. Mesa Heights, QC
MARTINEZ, Michael P.	9011	19 Mt. Clements St., Filinvest, QC
MENESES, Rolando F.	9072	3-C, Palma St., Xavierville Subd., Ph. 1, Loyola Hghts, QC
NOVELO, Filipina	9073	203-D, L&F Apt., Erwin Garcia St., Cubao, QC
ONG, Eduardo C.	9025	3895 Araro St., Palanan, Makati City
PACIOLES, Mariano Jr.	9032	26-E Eisenhower St., North Greenhills, San Juan City
PAMINTUAN, Ma. Belinda M.	9031	54 Ubay St., Sta. Mesa Heights, QC
RECTO, Rorietta	9018	Javilla Townhouse, 50 Felix Manalo St., QC
REYES, Ma. Dansel K.	9154	53A Laura St., Plainview, Mandaluyong City
REYES, Floren	9039	613 A. Mabini St., Manggahan, Pasig City
ROJAS, Lorenzo S.	9125	95 Kamias Road, QC
SAN AGUSTIN, Ma. Lysandra T.	9173	36 Camia St., Valle Verde II, Pasig City
TIONGSON, John Roderick	9172	36 Camia St., Valle Verde II, Pasig City
TOLENTINO, Melinda S.	9003	17 Dampol St., Damar Village, QC

The above defendants are advised to call our lawyers, **DY & ASSOCIATES LAW FIRM**, at telephone nos. 531-1249 & 535-4931 to discuss their compliance with the Writs.

The public is likewise requested to convey any information on the present whereabouts and assets of the above-named defendants to our lawyers. A **CASH REWARD** will be given to any person who can provide information leading to the successful collection of the amount that the above defendants are adjudged to pay. All information given shall be treated with strict confidence.

ALLEGRO RESOURCES CORPORATION
3rd Level, Shoppesville Arcade, Greenhills
San Juan, Metro Manila

(PDI – Oct. 29, 2007)

More of Godiva's breakthrough products

WHEN GODIVA FIRST LAUNCHED its pioneering skin whitening line 11 years ago, it was met with tremendous response from the market. As the company expanded its reach with more outlets and new innovative product lines, more and more customers swore by the brand. And not long enough, it captured the trust and loyalty of its discriminating clientele here and abroad.

And now, Godiva introduces its latest additions to its roster of highly trusted products-the Godiva LicoWhite Gentle Facial Wash and the Godiva Vitamin C Facial Scrub.

The Godiva Facial Wash is the first pH balanced, soap-free facial wash with licorice whitening ingredient and green tea extract. It is so gentle on the skin that one will feel the difference immediately-smooth, moisturized and refreshingly clean skin. With Godiva's signature ingredient-Licorice as a major skin whitening component, you get brighter skin in as early as seven days. The Green Tea Extracts component also aid in delaying skin aging; thus, giving you a more youthful glowing skin. This product is certainly a perfect first step in your skin care regimen.

More than just eliminating the dead skin cells of your skin, The Godiva Vitamin C Facial Scrub, on the other hand, keeps your skin healthy with the added Vitamin C. It's a natural facial scrub with orange peel granules bursting with Vitamin C to brighten and refine your skin. As a powerful antioxidant, Vitamin C protects your skin from free radicals and cellular damage. Orange peel gently exfoliates and unclogs pores, leaving your skin clean, clear, and moisturized.

"As a true innovator, Godiva is always at the forefront of developing new and exciting products that will serve the specific skin care needs of our discerning market", Fred Reyes, president and owner of Godiva Inc said.

GODIVA
GODIVA
Licorice
VITAMIN C
Facial Scrub

Godiva Natural Skin Care products are available at all Mercury Drugstore self-service outlets and at Watsons Beauty in SM malls. To find out more about the products, log on to www.godivaskincare.com.

Boning up on bone health and diabetes

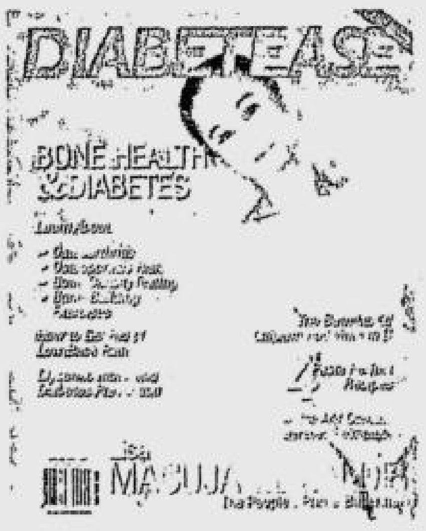
New research shows a link between bones, fat cells and diabetes. "Bones apparently produce a hormone that helps regulate blood sugar and body fat. This hormone is called osteocalcin," writes DiabetEASE editor-in-chief Dr. Joy Fontanilla.

Researchers found that adequate levels of osteocalcin may: 1) reduce insulin resistance (the inability of cells to respond to insulin action); 2) increase insulin production; 3) promote growth of the cells that make insulin-the pancreatic beta cells; and 4) prevent obesity. Likewise, people with type 2 diabetes were found to have low osteocalcin levels.

Diabetes also increases risk for various bone and joint problems. "These may be attributed to nerve damage, blood flow disorders, atrophy or muscle shrinkage, kidney dysfunction, inflammation, and obesity," according to Fontanilla.

Moreover, diabetes increases the risk for fractures. People with type 1 diabetes tend to have lower bone mass. Those with type 2 diabetes tend to have higher bone mass but poorer bone quality and higher risk of falls and injury.

Taking on a whole new, more portable look on its special second anniversary issue, DiabetEASE magazine brings a wider perspective to bone health. The current issue gives tips on how to strengthen bones and prevent early bone loss. It also features articles on the causes and prevention of low back pain, dealing with osteoarthritis and must-know facts about calcium and vitamin D.



To help keep bones in top shape, the October-November issue also highlights bone strengthening exercises, and the importance of bone density testing.

For folks with diabetes on the look-out for great healthy food, the magazine features four superb pasta recipes, as well as information about the glycemic index and how it can be used to create the right meal plan.

On the cover is Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, the Philippines' prima ballerina, who shares about how crucial peak bone health is in her career and how ballet helps bust stress away.

DiabetEASE is filled with the latest news and trends about diabetes and diabetes care. DiabetEASE is a bi-monthly glossy magazine for people with diabetes, their families, healthcare givers and the public in general.

DiabetEASE magazine is available in all National Bookstores nationwide and selected magazine outlets. For subscription inquiries, call 892-0723 to 24 or 813-5433.

43rd Anvil Awards is on

THE 43RD ANVIL AWARDS, SPONSORED annually by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), has been officially launched, kicking off the search for the outstanding PR programs for 2006-2007. The Anvil, the most highly regarded and widely participated in awards event in public relations in the country, is divided into two categories: PR programs and PR Tools, further divided into various sub-categories, capped by the Grand Anvil Awards. Anvil Awards contenders have until Oct. 31 to submit their entries to the Anvil Awards Committee at No. 20-B, San Mateo Street, Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City. The Anvil Awards rules may be downloaded from PRSP website www.prsp.org.ph or obtained from the Secretariat at 638-0010 or 638-0012.

City Government of Zamboanga
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** invites PhilGEPS registered suppliers/ manufacturer/contractors to apply for the following items.

Name of Projects	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Construction of Two (2) Storey Ten (10) Classroom Building at Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial High School, Sta. Maria	P7,840,060.64	Nov. 21, 2007 10:00 AM	Dec. 3, 2007 10:00 AM	P3,000.00

The Bid documents shall be available at the City Mayor's Office, Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division, City Hall, Zamboanga City starting **November 7-20, 2007** upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at **City Engineer's Office, Conference Hall, City Hall, Zamboanga City.**

The Bidder shall drop and enclose the original of the Technical Proposal in one sealed envelope; whereas, the original of the Financial Proposal shall be enclosed in another sealed envelope. Both envelopes shall then be placed in another single envelope. In the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the Procurement, Acquisition and Awards Division at telephone no. (062) 992-7763.

The **CITY GOVERNMENT OF ZAMBOANGA** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) **DR. MARIO D. ARRIOLA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Oct. 29, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Provincial Capitol 8700
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR

AN OPEN INVITATION TO ALL SUPPLIERS OF MEDICINES

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon (PGB), through the Bids and Awards Committee, is inviting all suppliers of medicines, to participate in its procurement needs of medicines for its eight (8) Provincial Hospitals and Twenty-Two (22) Provincial Health Stations. The PGB has allotted Eleven Million Four Hundred Ninety-Two Thousand One Pesos and Thirty-Eight Centavos (P11,492,001.38) for the last 2 months of CY 2007 and appropriated One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000) for CY 2008. We assure all those concerned that we, in the province of Bukidnon, fully and strictly adhere to the basic policy of transparency in accordance with the tenets of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. We also assure everyone that our budget allocation for our medicine requirements is very competitive because our procurement process is "commission-free". We repeat, and we would like to stress that we do not allow, much less, accept, "commission" or "bribe money" from any supplier or contractor, hence there is no reason for all of you to jack up your prices as part of your add-on costs.

We prefer BFAD accredited generic Drugs and Medicines, and we encourage manufacturers, importers and sole distributors who can offer the most advantageous prices to the PGB to participate in our bulk procurement scheme.

So for those interested to join in our procurement needs for medicines, kindly get in touch with our BAC Secretariat Ma. Joe-an P. Bayona at 088-221-2537, 088-221-4820 or call 09173491624.

(Sgd.) **JOSE MA. R. ZUBIRI, JR.**
Provincial Governor

(PDI – Oct. 29, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
MARIKINA POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE
Sta. Elena, Marikina City
Tel. No. 682-0591 / 933-6790

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Marikina Polytechnic College through its Bids and Awards Committee invites interested bidder to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of Desktop Computers with Printers.

The minimum bid is at Php 400,000.00 for the contract.

BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Receipt from prospective bidders, Letter of Intent (LOI)	November 05 - November 11, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
2. Issuance and availability of Bidding Documents.	November 12 - November 18, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
3. Pre-bid Conference	November 19, 2007 9:00 AM
4. Submission and Opening of Bid Documents	December 1, 2007 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

All particular relative to Eligibility screening, pre-bid Conference, evaluation of bid, Post Qualifications and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Bid documents will be available to prospective bidders at the BAC Office at the TESDP Building upon payment of non-refundable amount of TWO THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (Php 2,000.00). In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the official receipt issued by the Cashiers to the BAC Secretariat.

MPC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnity bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bid documents.

MPC reserves the right to accept BIDS that are considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **GUNDAWAY F. LAURO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – Oct. 29, 2007)

07 URVAN ESCAPADE
10 HOURS
P1,800
WITH DRIVER
7876776/7964377
09213497170

BUYING
ROLEX • Patek Philippe • AP
Panerai • IWC • Omega • Cartier
Also Diamonds and unusual watches
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7269687
email: worldwatch@gmail.com

BUY • SELL • PAWN
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& other SWISS SWATCHES
JEWELRY
DIAMONDS
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SPOT CASH
8341572
3829198

JOB Market
Read it every Sunday
with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

JOB Market sa LiBRe
You can now checkout more jobs from JobMarket Libre everyday!

Equal opportunity to less fortunate students

CHILDREN HAVE DREAMS, TOO, not just of becoming professionals someday, but of leading good lives.

These children's dreams will never be a reality if they are not given the chance to fulfill them. A chance is what they need, and this is what Insular Life's Adopt-A-Scholar program has been giving them for the past five years.

Started in 2003, the program is Insular Life employees' parallel effort to the Insular Life Foundation's educational programs particularly for the Muntinlupa Itaas Elementary School (MIES). MIES is the company's adopted school under the Adopt-a-School Program in partnership with the Department of Education.

Insular Life employees-from the rank and file up to the CEO, voluntarily adopted 100 MIES scholars and pledged to support them until they graduate from grade school by providing for their school supplies and bags. My Tan-Karo, head of the actuarial services department, feels that by "adopting" a child, she is able to give back to the society what was generously given her when she was still studying.

Assistant vice president Dammy Careng, meanwhile, sees pride in the company's efforts to be socially responsible. "I'm glad Insular Life is not just (concerned with growing its) business, so I make it a point to support company projects that I feel are socially relevant. My father did this sort of thing way back so it's nice that my wife and I are also able to extend this kind of assistance."

In 2005, in support of the League of Corporate Foundation's "Sa Pagbasa may Pag-Asa Program," reading books were added to the yearly supply of school materials and bags. To this day, scholars still receive reading books not just to practice their reading skills, but to instill moral lessons in their young hearts.

To date, funds from the program have also contributed to several more books for the school. Complementing the Insular Life Foundation's own book donation, excess funds from employee contribution for the children's school materials were used to purchase additional books for the library. While not every student may be adopted by Insular Life's employees, all of them stand to benefit from these different reading books stationed at the school's second floor library.

Five years since Adopt-A-Scholar started, 53 students have already graduated. While three were disqualified from continuing, 44 scholars are still being supported by the program. One of these scholars is Violeta Tabayag's daughter, Jonnalyn, who is in grade six. Manang Violy, as she is called at MIES, is the school janitress. She has eight children, and while she earns a little from cleaning the school's premises, she says her husband does not have a regular job.

Insular Life's Adopt-A-Scholar's culmination will happen a year from now. The grade one students five years ago would have started the last year of their elementary schooling. It will also be the last time the employee-sponsors of Insular Life will provide funds for their school materials and reading books. Just like the ones before them, these children's willingness to achieve their dreams, however difficult they may be, will be seen in the next years after graduation when they move on to high school and hopefully take college or vocational/technical courses. But for a few years before that happens, they know that what they needed was a chance to equal opportunity in order to fulfill these dreams. And through the Insular Life Adopt-a-Scholar Program, that was what they were given.

INSULAR Life's Adopt-A-Scholar Program scholars pose with their school materials after receiving them from Insular Life president and COO Mayo Jose B. Ongsingco, Insular Life Foundation administrator Ana Maria Soriano, and MIES OIC Dr. Diosdado Medina (back row, left, middle and right, respectively.)

Highest ginseng capsule for energy

ENERGIN 300 WAS RECENTLY LAUNCHED IN THE LOCAL MARKET OFFERING THE highest ginseng content in capsule form. Ginseng has been used for thousands of years in traditional Chinese medicine to give sustained physical, mental and sexual energy. Aside from its high ginseng content, Energin 300 also contains 100 mg of royal jelly, which is well known for its rejuvenating and revitalizing effects on the body. Hence, Energin 300 is said to have the one-two punch which can help knock out many of the common performance problems encountered in daily life. "Prolonged endurance to last long and be in top form is what Energin 300 can offer," says Charles Cultura, product manager of Trianon International, which is the local distributor of Energin 300. The product is manufactured by Now Foods, in Illinois. It is one of the leading manufacturers of high-quality vitamins and food supplements in the United States. Cultura says Energin 300 contains 300 mg of ginseng, the highest ginseng content in the Philippine market, and is about two to 10 times higher than the ginseng content of available local brands. Cultura reports that they have conducted pre-launch trials of Energin 300 among office executives, managers and rank-and-file workers; call center workers, taxi drivers, students, and the majority of indicated improvement in their physical and mental performance. Married males also claim they noted improvement in their virility and sexual potency. Ginseng's "anti-fatigue action" is related to its ability to stimulate the central nervous system and release of non-adrenaline energy-enhancing hormones, as described by Mark Mayell in "Off-the-shelf Natural Health". Energin 300 is available in all Mercury Drugstores. For inquiries, call the Trianon hotline at 815-3239 or text 0917-8836164.

OBITUARIES

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

IN LOVING MEMORY
ON THE TENTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY
OF

ASUNCION "SONING" HOJAS ESCANO

of Cagayan de Oro City

(BELOVED WIFE OF THE LATE ROQUE "TETE" VANO ESCANO AND FOUNDRESS & FIRST CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD RIA HOJAS ESCANO FOUNDATION, INC.)

Who died in the grace of our Lord last October 29, 1997

Holy masses will be offered today, Monday, October 29, 2007 at the following:

Greenhills Memorial Park, Bulua	4:00 p.m.
San Vicente Parish, Cugman	6:00 a.m.
San Isidro Labrador, Gusa	6:00 a.m.
Jesus Nazareno Parish, Recto Avenue	5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Fatima Parish, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Carmen	6:00 a.m.
St. Augustine Cathedral	5:30 p.m.
San Antonio de Padua, Nazareth	6:00 a.m.
Sto. Niño Parish, Cogon	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception, Bulua	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Camaman-an	6:00 a.m.
Carmelite Monastery, Bukidnon	6:00 a.m.

The RIA (ROQUE, ISIDRO & ASUNCION) Hojas Escano Foundation Inc. Board of Trustees, Officers and Staff, Grandson FRANZ JOSEF, relatives & friends request the pious readers to remember ASUNCION in their prayers.

Remembering Our Beloved...

Dra. Engracia V. Lagman

(1924 – 1992)

Schedule of Celebration of the Holy Eucharist on her 15th Death Anniversary at the following churches:

OUR LADY OF REMEDIES PARISH
Malate Catholic Church, Malate, Manila
7:00 PM, 30 October 2007

CATHEDRAL SHRINE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
Regalado Avenue, Fairview Park, Quezon City
6:00 AM, 30 October 2007

CHRIST THE KING PARISH
Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City
6:00 AM, 30 October 2007

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH
San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila
7:00 AM, 30 October 2007

MARY THE QUEEN PARISH
West Greenhills, San Juan City
7:00 AM, 30 October 2007

METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL
San Fernando, Pampanga
7:00 AM, 30 October 2007

MINOR BASILICA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
Manila Metropolitan Cathedral, Intramuros, Manila
7:30 AM, 30 October 2007

MONASTERIO DE STA. CLARA
C-5, Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City
6:00 AM, 30 October 2007

MOUNT CARMEL SHRINE
New Manila, Quezon City
7:00 AM, 30 October 2007

NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES
Kanlaon corner Retiro Streets, Quezon City
7:30 AM, 30 October 2007

NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY
Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City
7:15 AM, 30 October 2007

OUR LADY OF SORROWS PARISH
Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga
6:00 AM, 30 October 2007

PARISH OF THE HEARTS OF JESUS & MARY
West Triangle, Quezon City
6:30 AM, 30 October 2007

SAN AGUSTIN PARISH
San Agustin, San Fernando, Pampanga
6:30 AM, 30 October 2007

SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City
6:15 AM, 30 October 2007

SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City
7:15 AM, 30 October 2007

SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE
EDSA corner Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City
6:30 AM, 30 October 2007

STA. PERPETUA PARISH
D. Tuazon Street, Quezon City
6:00 AM, 30 October 2007

STA. RITA DE CASIA PARISH
Philam Homes, Quezon City
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STA. RITA DE CASIA PARISH
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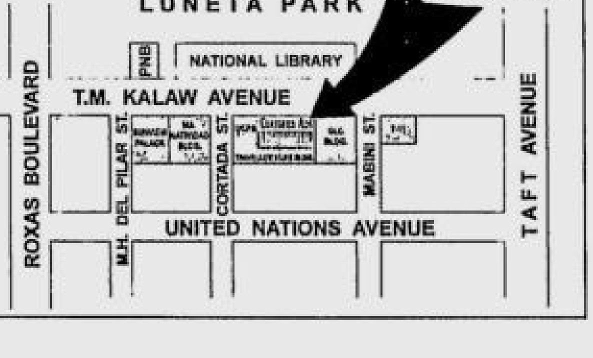

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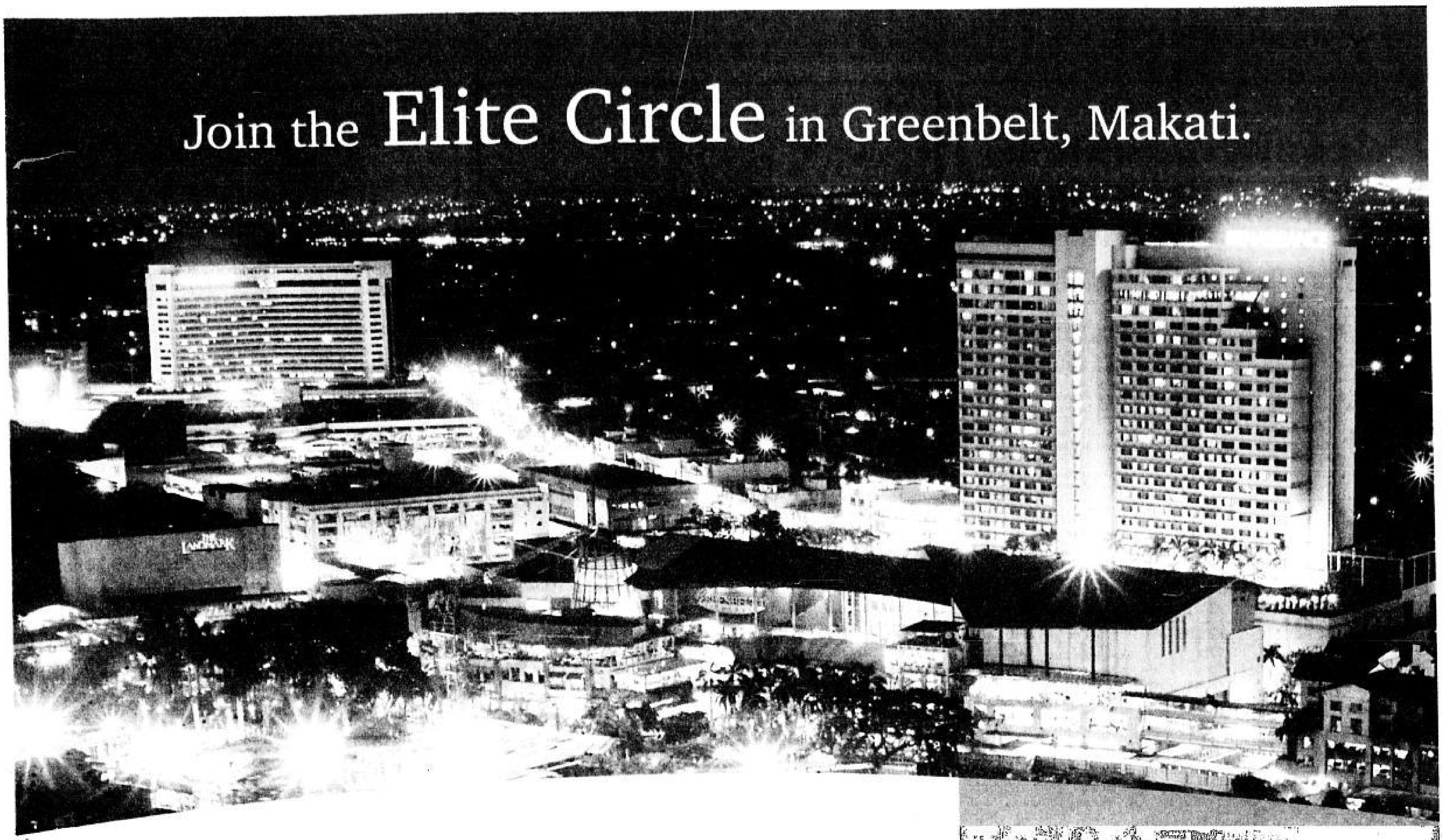

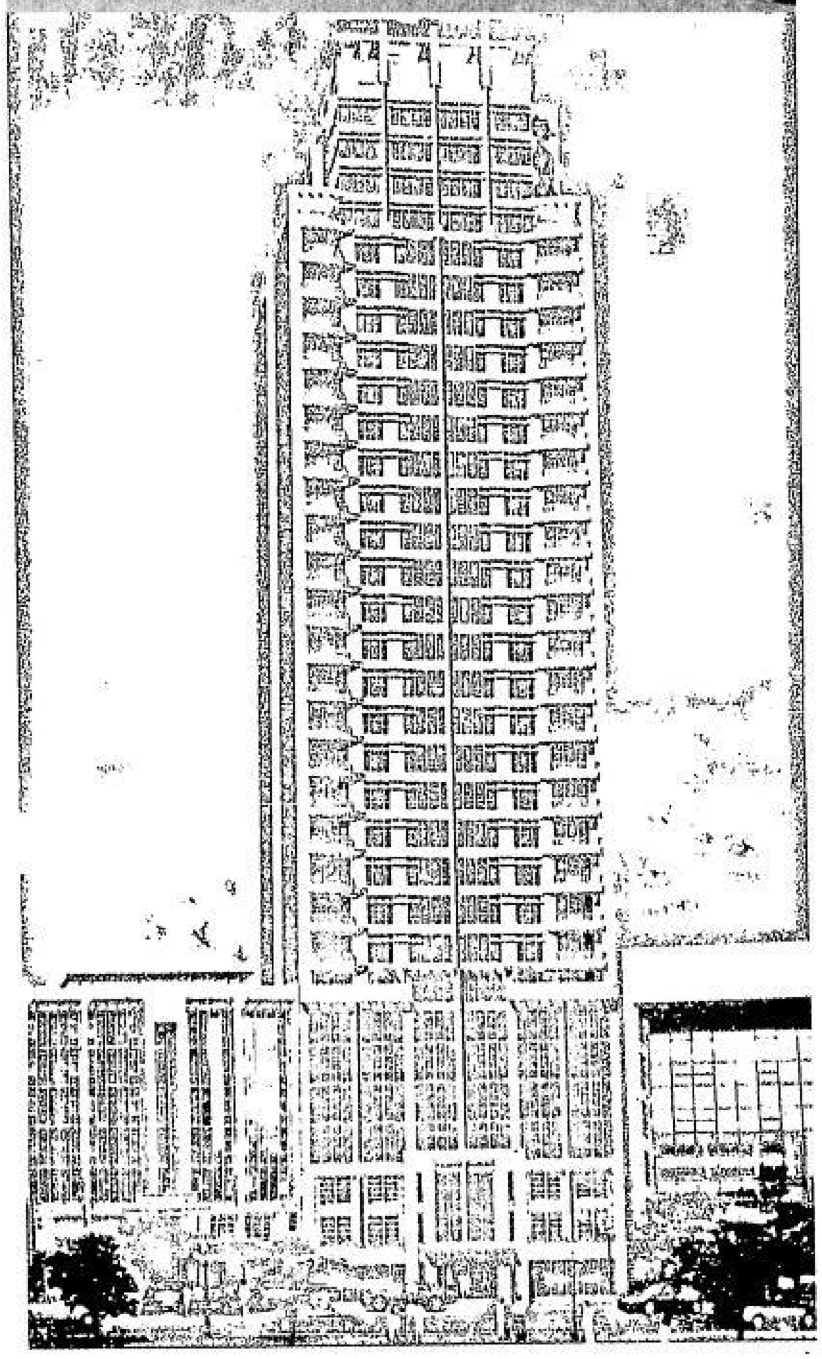

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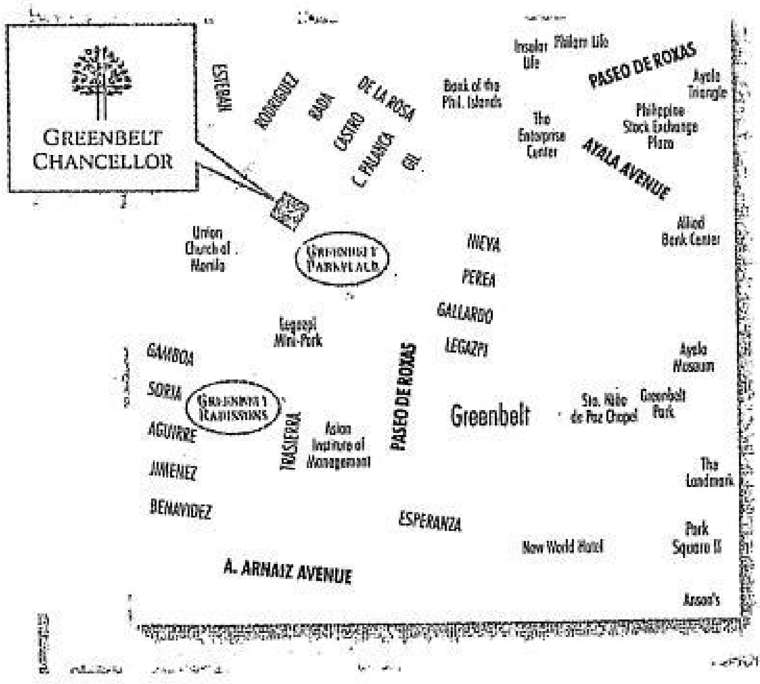
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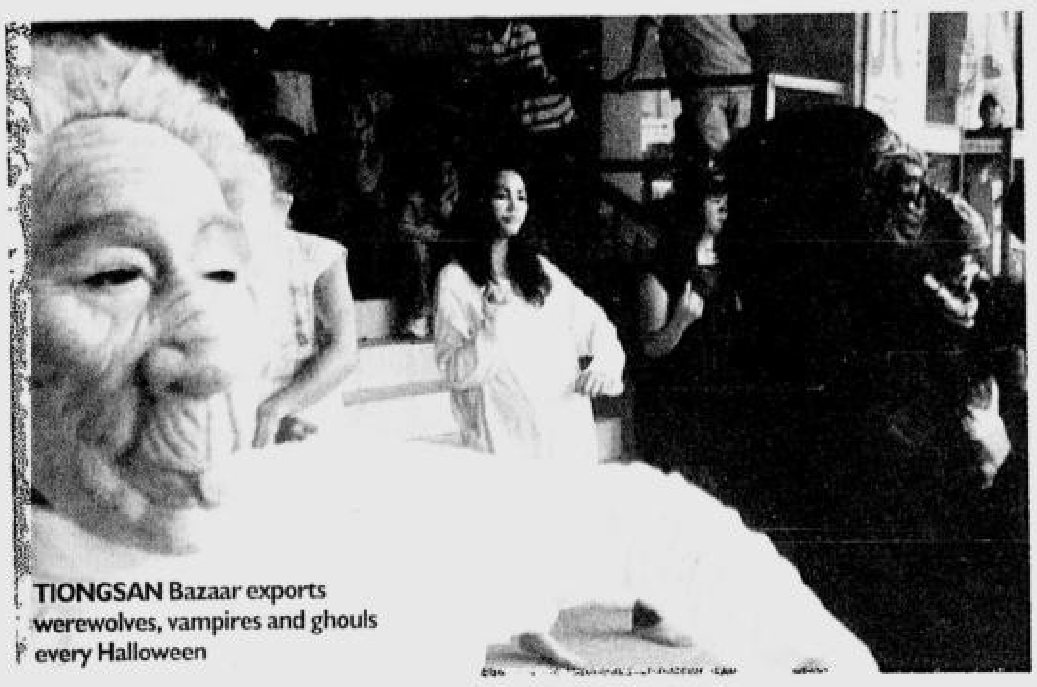
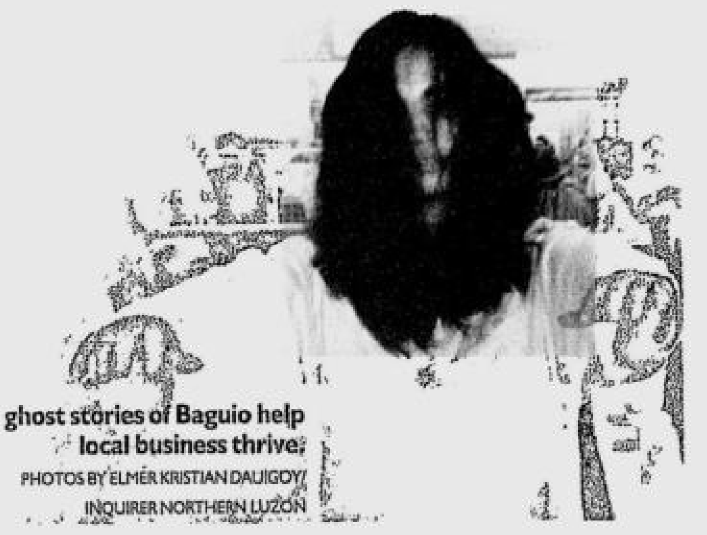


TIONGSAN Bazaar exports werewolves, vampires and ghouls every Halloween

means profit



OLD ghost stories of Baguio help local business thrive.
PHOTOS BY ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY/ INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUMMER capital's signature fog lends atmosphere to old stories about its wandering ghosts, and that always means profit for local businesses.

Frequent visitors from Manila still look for the now closed "Spirits Disco" the moment they arrive for the long All Saints' Day weekend, believing they can finally glimpse the facility's elusive specter.

But they will more likely encounter street dancers wearing garish monster masks and makeup outside one of the homegrown Tiong San Bazaar buildings here.

Werewolves and vampires, who moonwalk to Michael Jackson's song "Thriller," have been a good formula because they have raised the bazaar's weekend sales by 20 percent since 1990, says store manager Junelyn Dasargo.

And like all good business practices, the dancers have been exported to the bazaar's La Trinidad branch in Benguet, which Dasargo helps manage.

She says Baguio businesses do not just dress up their shops for Halloween as malls often do, "they thrive on the stories, too."

Urban legend

What has become profitable for Baguio businesses is the fact that the urban legend about the "white lady" here has become part of the country's memories about Baguio, say officials of the Baguio Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

Instead of driving tourists away, the "white lady," who is said to haunt a road that leads to Camp John Hay and the Philippine Military Academy, invites adventurous visitors to a midnight haunt and a snack or drink downtown, says Jacquelyn Acoba Ver, 70, BCCI assistant board secretary.

These stories are rarely forgotten because they are often stuff reinvented over the Internet or reenacted in films, she says.

Holiday economics

Officially, the brisk tourism Baguio generates because of the "horror stories" is the best example of how Malacañang's "holiday economics works," says Carlos Honorio Estepa, board director of the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA).

"People will always spend more time on holiday if the holiday is longer. Japan has recognized this theory," he says.

But Estepa acknowledges that Baguio fog has given the city a marketing dimension no other town can beat.

He says fog is the same reason why marriage counselors and wedding planners still recommend Baguio for weddings.

"The fog and the chill may mean romantic weddings, but it also means a fantastic adventure for this generation who still see Baguio ghost stories flashed on television this time of the year," he says.

Baguio business has had a quiet partnership with "its ghosts since the 1950s," Acoba Ver says.

Quiet partnership

Most of the popular Baguio ghost stories date back to the 1950s and the 1960s, and are often tied to wanderings spirits of Japanese or Filipino soldiers who died at the end of World War II.

Baguio was designed and built by the American colonial government, but Halloween was never openly celebrated here, except inside Camp John Hay, Estepa says.

Halloween in the 1970s were often initiated by American servicemen and American expatriates, who ended up partying by themselves downtown, he says.

But Baguio ghost stories thrive because even traders are compelled "to live with their ghosts, and it has not affected their businesses at all," Acoba Ver says.

"Teachers Camp [which is celebrating its centennial in 2008] has been the subject of various ghost stories. The camp rents out dormitory rooms to teachers and students—and I live there as a teacher. Yet, students still camp there today even if the ghost stories persist. They come expecting a fright-filled evening and end up in each other's embrace," she says.

Vallejo Hotel, an old American-style building near the Baguio Cathedral, inspired many ghost stories in its heyday because of the architecture.

"But people still booked rooms there [until it closed seven years ago]. Stories passed down to Manila folk involve visitors feeling an invisible presence nudge their hand or their back. But like many Baguio horror stories, these spirits are harmless, never malevolent," Acoba Ver says.

Made up stories

Many other ghost stories attributed to other stores were made up, but traders used those to their advantage, she says.

She says "Spirits" was created by businessman Alex Mina in the 1980s, and it became popular because of stories shared by customers that the disco house hosted "a presence."

"People came looking for the ghost. I never felt anything at the time. But young people came again and again, so it became popular," she says.

Tiong San Bazaar also had no ghost stories to rely on.

But it was conscious about the city's haunting reputation, so Joseph Cabarle, the bazaar's marketing expert in Baguio, convinced store clerks and attendants to volunteer as the store's Halloween dance troupe, says Dasargo.

The dance troupe helped sell the store's inventory of masks (priced at P200 to P300 apiece) but it soon noticed a considerable rise in sales between Oct. 28 and Nov. 2, she says.

The troupe has altered its cast, but continues to dance at the store front on Harrison Road here each year, Dasargo says.

The volunteers are not paid extra for the chore, "but they love doing it because it helps their promotional prospects and it helps management pick out the talented workers," she says.

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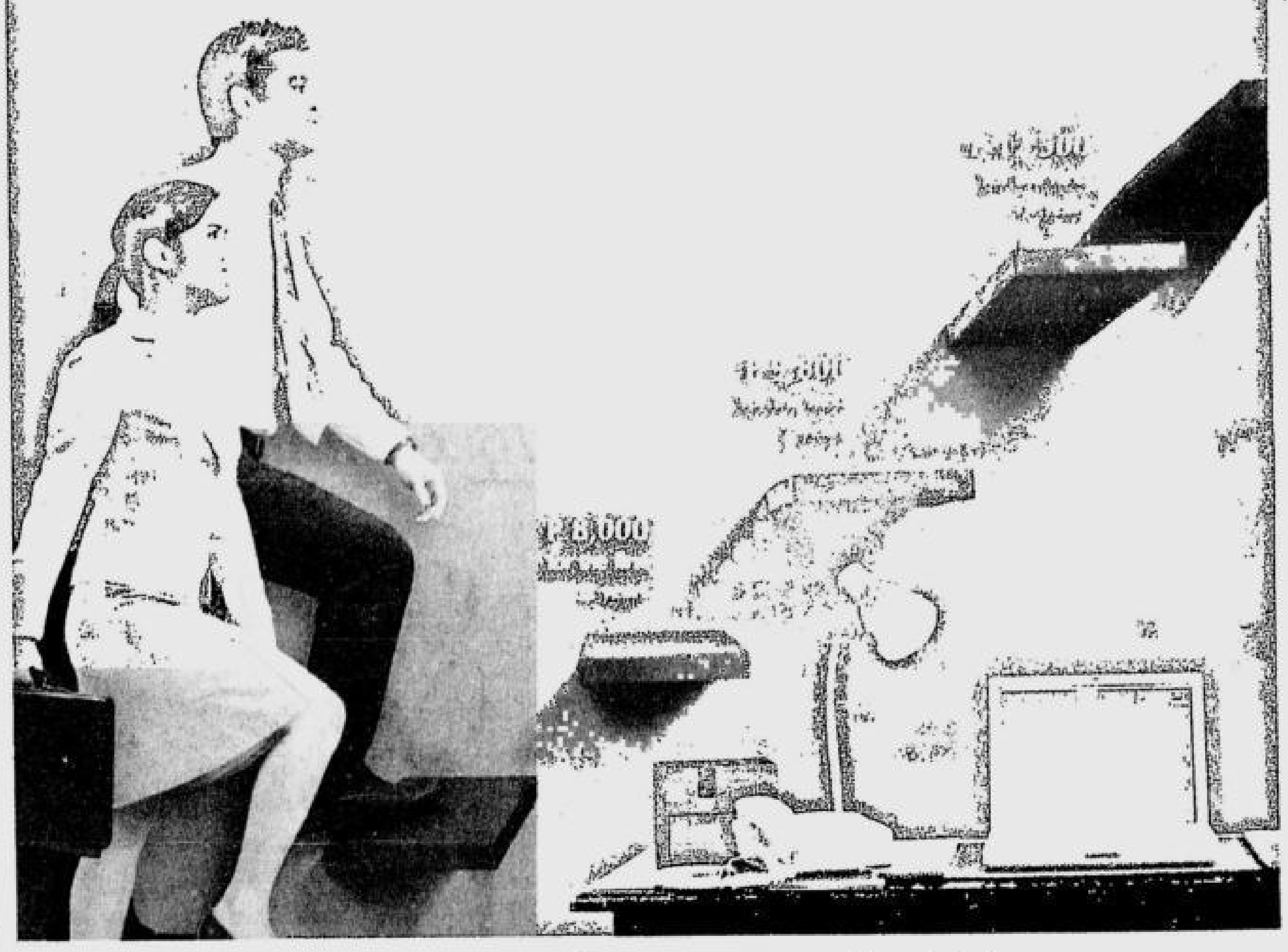

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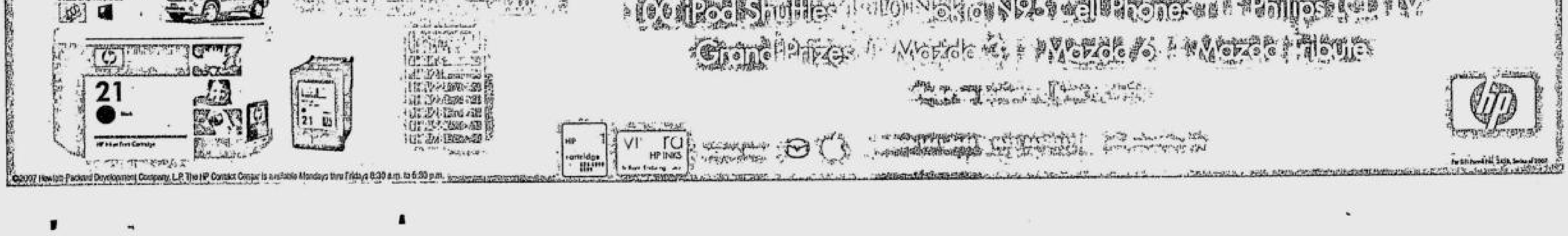
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Poverty reduction main business of BiD Challenge

GENE Bonggo and Romy Miranda, 2nd and 3rd from left, hold KLM airlines models after the two win the Philippine BiD Business Challenge at the SGV conference hall in Makati. PHOTOS BY ROMY HOMILLADA

By Riza T. Olchondra

BEING THE FIRST BUSINESS plan competition to address the problem of limited access to investors for the small and medium enterprise (SME) segment, it comes as no surprise that the Philippine BiD Challenge received a warm response in its first year.

The competition encourages the development of business models that generate profit and support poverty reduction by matchmaking the proponents with promising business plans to mentors and potential investors. The 100,000 cash award to the 10 best entries were surely a great draw, but more than the cash, competitors were attracted to the possibility of being mentored by specialists and being matched with prospective investors.

The Philippine BiD Challenge is a satellite search of the International BiD Challenge, which the Business in Development (BiD) Network Foundation initiated to stimulate and support business ideas that are geared toward making profit and improving living standards in developing countries. The program was introduced to the country with the non-profit group Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) spearheading the local effort.

PBSP trustee Marixi Prieto, chairman of the board of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and one of the jurors for the Philippine BiD Challenge, noted that there was a wide range of entries, which is good for giving various industries more exposure.

By the end of May this year, 221 proposals were submitted, of which 169 met the criteria. Each plan was screened three times by separate professionals in the Philippines. The rating and constructive feedback has been shared with the entrepreneurs.

The 50 Round 2 participants were given the green light to develop a solid and full-fledged business plan by Sept. 3. They were provided with an expert to coach and mentor them during the process.

Out of the 50, only 42 turned in their plans for the Jury of the Philippine BiD Challenge to study.

DAVID Balangue (left), chair, Philippine BiD Challenge, shakes hands with Ambassador Robert Brinks of The Netherlands.

Jurors also interviewed the finalists before selecting the winners.

Finally, in an awards gala on Oct. 22 at the AIM Conference Center in Makati City, the 10 best entries were announced. The top two were named national winners and qualified their respective authors to compete in the worldwide phase in the Netherlands come the first week of December.

The winners were "KingsGrill" by Romy Miranda and Conrado Contreras, and "Tire Recycling" by Gene Bonggo.

Rounding up the top 10 were "Peanut Project" by Raffy Espiritu, "Tenorio Manila" by Brian Tenorio, "Roof Tiles From Lahar" by Adolfo Pinlac, "Promoting Muscovado" by Deborah Sabarre, "Charcoal Production" by Juan Marquez, "Crab Shells" by Alfonso Gamboa, "Lemon Grass Oil" by Aladino Moraca, "Every Home Will Have One" by Macario Galvez.

Each of the winning business plans earned P100,000 for the authors to use as capital. In addition, Miranda, Contreras and Bonggo each won tickets to the Netherlands to join the world competition phase.

But PBSP chairperson David Balangue, a managing partner of SGV & Co., said that he hoped the competitors would continue to work on their respective projects and encourage other socially-oriented entrepreneurs to do the same.

"(They) are all winners, and this is certainly not the end. There is certainly a brighter future ahead for innovative and socially-oriented businesses," he said.

BiD Network Foundation director John van Duursen had something to say to local investors as well, "There was some innovation and good support, and in the future we would like to see a lot more innovation. We encourage investors and financial institutions to adopt socially-oriented business plans so that they can attract foreign investments. This will promote matchmaking and encourage more innovative business centered on poverty reduction. Local investors can take the first step, so that foreign investors can take it a step further."

The top ten winners:

1. "Tire Recycling" by Gene Bonggo. Through a simple buffing machine process, scrap tires are made into shredded, reclaimed rubber. International buyers from China and other countries have a large appetite for this and the production is easily (micro-) franchised out. This established businesses wants to expand its operations.

2. "Kingsgrill" by Romy Miranda & Conrado Contreras. Kingsgrill produces a quick-to-light, biodegradable, environment-friendly, safe and economical source of alternative fuel; it's a charcoal solution, which is a collaboration with CMC Ventures and Filgenuity, Inc. in Scandinavian countries.

3. "Peanut Project" by Raffy Espiritu. Selling a market-preferred, high-yielding peanut variety to domestic client through seed access, technology extension, postharvest processing and marketing.

4. "Tenorio Manila" by Brian Tenorio. Philippine-made bespoke designer shoes. Western Inspiration + Eastern Imagination = a Global Understanding of Stylish Footwear.

5. "Roof Tiles" by Adolfo Pinlac. Manufacturing of long lasting, low-cost concrete roof tiles using a proven technology, bringing it to commercial scale.

6. "Promoting Muscovado" by Deborah Sabarre. Muscovado is a brown, soft sugar laced with more minerals and trace elements beneficial to the body. Increasing demand for healthy sugar both in the domestic and export markets led some sugarcane farmers' cooperatives in Western Batangas to consolidate and in partnership with Ideals, develop a muscovado sugar processing enterprise.

7. "Charcoal Production" by Juan Marquez. The coconut husk charcoal briquettes are a cleaner and cheaper alternative to liquified petroleum gas (LPG) and are easier to prepare. Besides, it provides alternative fertilizer and pesticide.

8. "Crab Shells" by Alfonso Gamboa. For this community enterprise, crab meat is a primary product for export while crab shells were considered waste. Crab shells, fortunately, can be processed into chitin and chitosan, which are widely used in pharmacology, medicine, dietetics, biotechnology, cosmetics, waste water treatment, textile and wood and paper manufacturing.

9. "Lemon Grass Oil" by Aladino Moraca. Oil extracted from organically grown lemon grass (Cymbopogon citratus) is an active ingredient in perfumes, cosmetics, soap, hair care products and has medical elements. Our three years of past research on the design, management, community organizing approaches and marketing of produce guarantees the smooth operation of an essential oil enterprise.

10. "Every Home Will Have One" by Macario Galvez. Profound health education through a popular book, written in the lay person's language. Short "clinical stories." The business aims to translate this book into Filipino and sell it.

Palaisdaan Restaurant at 16: Creating a niche with country ambience and good food

WHEN THE LATE ENtrepreneur Marianito "Eto" de los Santos of Tayabas, Quezon, transformed his "barikan" (drinking area) into a home-based business in 1991, little did he know that he will be starting one of the most sought-after country dining places in the Philippines—Palaisdaan Restaurant.

Rene de los Santos, son of Mang Eto and now the restaurant's proprietor, recalls that such venture was a wise move by his father

"My father, then engaged in farming and construction supply, entertained friends in his sprawling farm and fishpond in between shots of lambanog," he recounts.

"Meanwhile, my mother, Filomena 'Luming' de los Santos, is a good cook who could easily whip up dishes for guests who enjoy the country air from Mt. Banahaw," he added.

News of her cooking savvy and the place's natural charm spread like wildfire and soon the couple began receiving food orders more than they could handle.

With borrowed capital, the couple decided to run their place as a full-blown enterprise, hired helpers and built additional bamboo and nipa huts to accommodate the growing patronage.

They also introduced the floating raft dining hut, a novel concept which will later be replicated by other restaurants in other parts of the country.

Soon after, hordes of foreign and local tourists, celebrities, politicians and VIPs from all over were flocking to the place which included the then Senator Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

KUWERDAS string ensemble serenades diners

Over the years, they landscaped the area and added boating and fishing activities for the family, making it a must-see tourist destination in the Lucena-Lucban corridor.

Delos Santos said that despite its touristic character, Palaisdaan's main attraction is still the traditional Filipino cuisine such as seafoods, kare-kare, and grilled meat.

The restaurant's specialty is the "sinugno" or grilled tilapia in coconut milk and menudencia, Tayabas' local version of the menudo.

Native delicacies such as longganisa, budin (cassava cake) and nilupak are also available. For an authentic feel of barrio dining, food should be eaten "kamayan" style

Dining experience is enhanced by the harmonious blending of the voices of Kuwerdas, the resident string ensemble of the restaurant which can sing kundiman, oldies standards, Spanish songs and even Pinoy novelties.

According to Delos Santos, Palaisdaan peaks during the summer-time fiestas in Laguna and Quezon provinces, where people go to religious pilgrimages and group excursions.

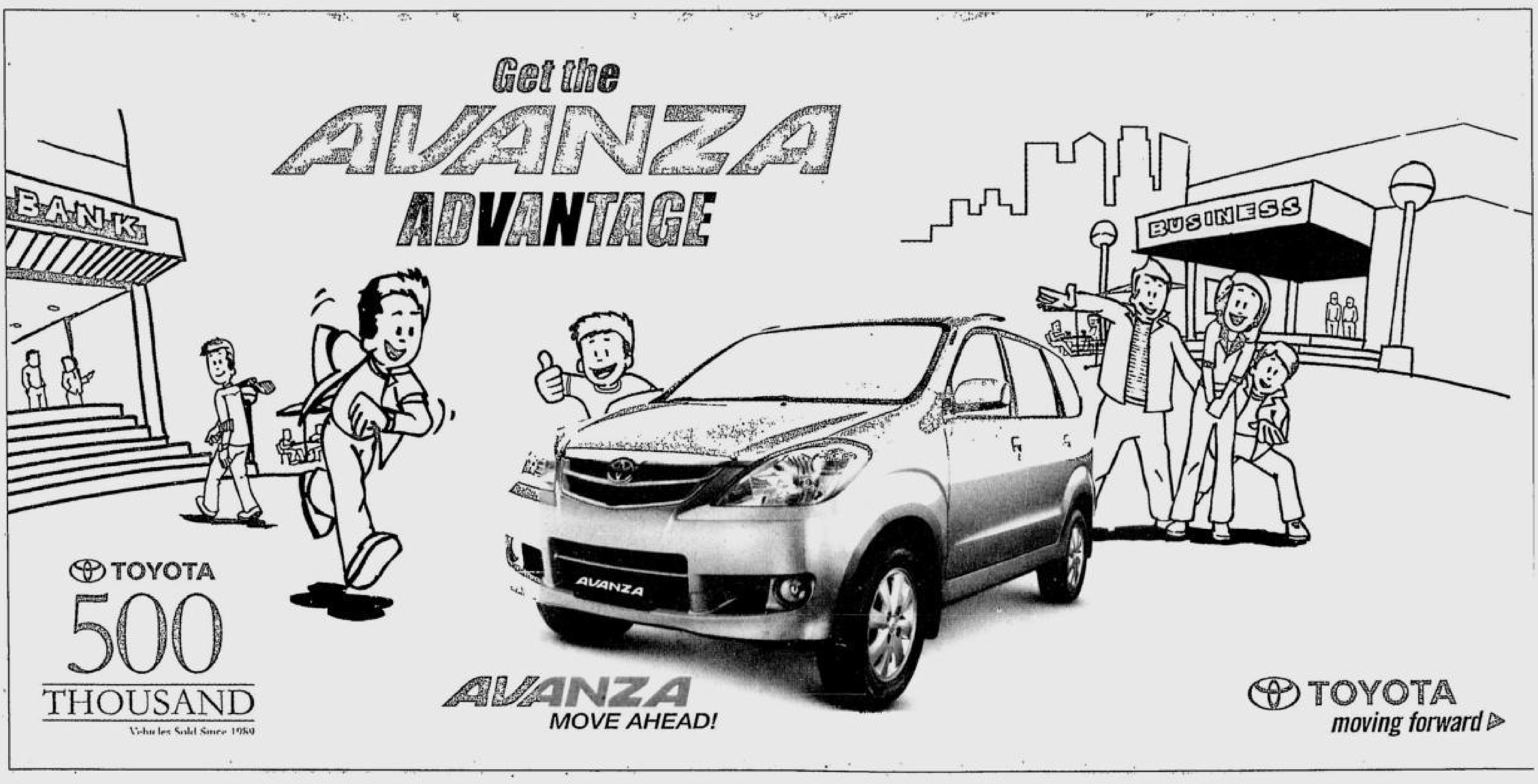
He said that on a typical day, they receive an average of 150 visitors, attesting to its mystic drawing power despite its secluded location.

On weekends, he said there are visitors who drive all the way from Manila just to have a sumptuous lunch or dinner, and enjoy the sights by the rustic countryside. Many of them are balikbayans who sorely missed good Filipino food.

Today, Palaisdaan has grown into a 1.3-hectare property, with 34 bamboo huts, 24 of them floating, and four multi-purpose pavilions which can accommodate up to a thousand guests.

The restaurant currently has a staff complement of more than 30 waiters and cooks.

As part of its expansion, Palaisdaan Restaurant will open several lodging units by December for guests who want to enjoy total rural experience.



GOINGS-ON

G&W taps CBRE

CB RICHARD ELLIS (CBRE) WAS recently appointed property manager for Grand Hamptons Place by G&W Architects, Engineers, Project Development Consultants.

The Grand Hamptons Place is an exclusive 21-story residential building situated between Manila Golf and Crescent Park in Crescent West, Fort Bonifacio Global City.

The initial two-year contract covers management of day-to-day operations, general administration, tenancy management, public relations management, as well as budgeting and staff training.

CBRE manages 20 accounts under property management and close to 20 accounts under facilities management nationwide.

Cornell holds meet at Discovery Shores

THE CORNELL HOTEL SCHOOL Asia Pacific Conference will be held at Discovery Shores, Boracay from Oct. 31 to Nov. 4.

The convention and reunion will bring together members of the Asia-Pacific Chapter of the Cornell Hotel Society (CHS) composed of graduates, attendees, and friends of the various hospitality programs of the Cornell Hotel School in Ithaca, New York and the Cornell-Nanyang Institute in Singapore.

Participants will arrive in Manila on Oct. 31 and will be feted in a reception dinner at Museum Café, Ayala Museum.

Welcoming the delegates will be Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano, who will also open this year's conference, and Cornell Club Philippines' president congressman Martin Romualdez.

Panel speakers include Cornell-Nanyang Institute Dean Judy Siguaw and Social Security System President Corazon de la Paz. Aside from Congressman Romualdez, another noted club member gracing the event is Annabell Santos-Wisniewski, CHS Philippine Chapter president and president of Raintree Partners. HSAI-Raintree, Inc. manages Discovery Suites, Discovery Country Suites Tagaytay and Discovery Shores Boracay.

DOT-PAL sales mission in Seoul, Busan set

The Department of Tourism (DOT) and national flag carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) will undertake a joint sales mission in the Korean cities of Seoul and Busan on Nov. 4-10.

The DOT-PAL mission will promote the Philippines' tourism destinations to Korean travel wholesalers in those two cities, which account for the bulk of Korea's 11.6-million outbound market.

Invited to join the mission were tourism property operators servicing PAL wholesalers as well as newly-established resorts and DOT-accredited properties that have undergone major renovation.

Poised to join the mission are Crowne Plaza, Diamond Hotel, Hyatt Hotel, Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Traders Hotel, Badian Island Resort & Spa, Hilton Cebu Resort & Spa, Maribago Bluewater, Sumilon Bluewater Island Resort, Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort & Spa, Bohol Beach Club, The Marco Polo Davao, Microtel Inns & Suites and SEAIR.

CCCI bags award

The Cebu Chamber of Commerce & Industry was named the Most Outstanding Chamber in the Philippines for 2007, besting 110 other chambers nationwide.

CCCI was also elevated to the Hall of Fame as a result of winning the award for three consecutive years. The award was bestowed during the recently concluded Philippine Business Conference at the Manila Hotel last Oct. 24-26, 2007.

The Most Outstanding Chamber Award is a project of PCCI, which seeks to recognize local chambers whose leadership and dynamism contributed to business growth and development of the community.

Coming Up Roses

A pharmacy chain's enabling experiences with PLDT

It began simply enough. Rose Pharmacy Incorporated, a Cebu-based nationwide drugstore chain, was offered DSL and VPN business solutions by the PLDT Corporate Business Group. Using this to connect their Head Office to their different branches is obviously necessary for the efficient and effective running of their business. But when the branches in question are spread all over the Philippines, there may be some concerns raised about the completeness of this connectivity.

There was no need for these concerns. Rose Pharmacy expected uninterrupted connections, wider geographic coverage and overall better performance than what they had experienced with previous service providers, and immediate action on problems encountered regarding their networks. PLDT not only met these high expectations, they surpassed them, providing them with greater bandwidth, incomparable service, and ease of use.

Started out as a neighborhood drugstore along Martires St. (now M.J. Cuenco Ave.) in Cebu City in 1952, Rose Pharmacy has grown into one of the largest drugstore chain of stores in the country. It entered a new milestone in its history as it opened its 100th outlet along M.C. Briones St. in Mandaue City. Rose Pharmacy was established in 1952 by the Boholano enterprising couple Engr. Benjamin Collantes Lim and Rosario Borja Lim.

Using Shops.Work and SMART Bro Enterprise Edition, PLDT and SMART Broadband Inc. also outfitted Rose Pharmacy with their own VPN (Virtual Private Network), powered by the PLDT/SMART Group's unparalleled wired and wireless broadband networks through which they were able to transmit sensitive and important information to each other with more speed and ease than ever before. With Shops.Work and Smart Bro Enterprise Edition they are easily able to obtain data on their stock balance, critical stocks, inventories, and other necessary information without ever needing to inconvenience a single human worker.

As for their telesales, the entire system is handled by Bosscentral, which incorporates Call Management features no one else offers. They find such features as multi-line hunting and conference-calling – being able to accept calls at all times or forward them to their cellphones – to be very convenient for them. Another feature they use frequently is caller-ID, which allows them to easily contact their clients because names and numbers are recorded and stored.

ROSExpress

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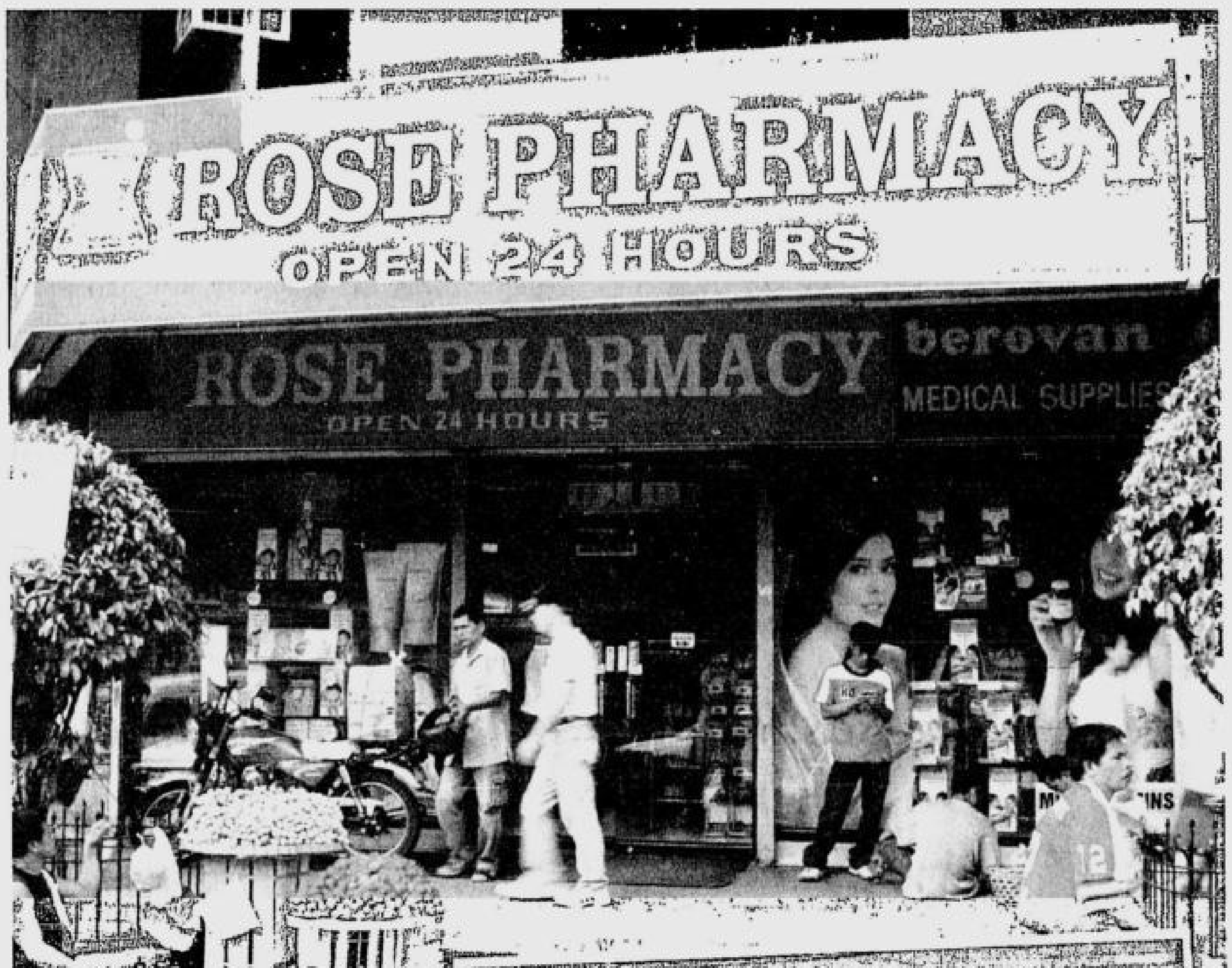
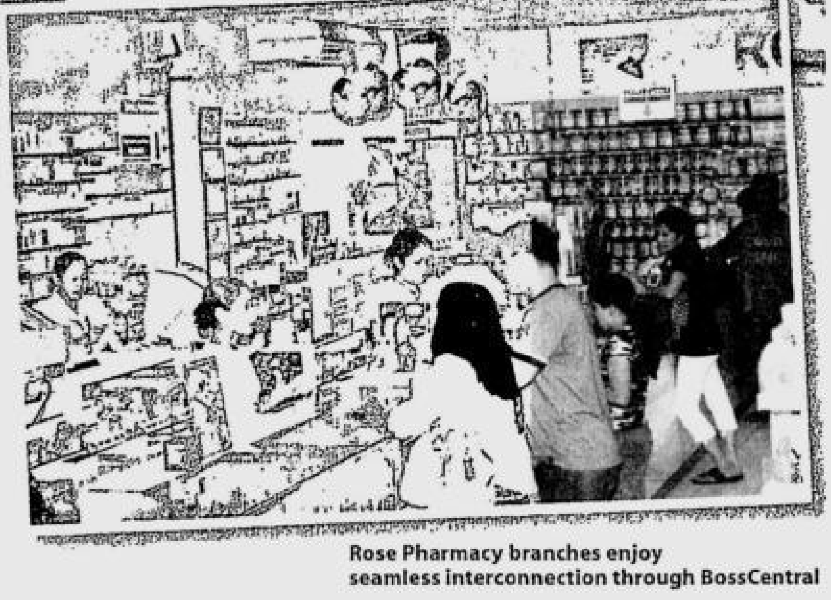
The savings this system has accorded them, in monetary terms as well as time savings and convenience, is considerable. The quick connections and fast linkages between themselves, their customers and branches are helpful in raising efficiency and thus, their ability to turn a profit.

Special PLDT Solutions for Rose Pharmacy

Which is why it is not surprising that when Rose Pharmacy launched their latest service, ROSExpress Delivery (customers just have to call 238-ROSE / or 238-7673), they turned to PLDT. ROSExpress was also outfitted with the new SWUP (Shops. Work UnPlugged) technology that made it possible for customers to pay with either cash or credit/debit cards wherever they may be -- swipe-on-site convenience that was very much appreciated by card-using customers.

Rose Pharmacy says it will continue relying on PLDT for all its connectivity needs, truly seeing it as a trusted business expert partner as they continue to emerge as one of the leading drugstore chains in the nation.





Rose Pharmacy branches enjoy seamless interconnection through BossCentral

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SR. EMMA Alday, owner and manager of Casarap.

MOST of the ingredients used in Casarap are naturally grown or organic.

Former nun runs business for fun

Text and Photos by Maricar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN JOSE, BATANGAS—Casarap defines a greenhouse in a totally different way. Behind the tendrils and vines of vegetables and ornamental flowers is what its nun-turned-proprietress calls "fun dining."

It also serves as a gallery of Batangueño arts and culture amid an ambiance of peace and privacy.

Casarap is owned and managed by Emma Alday, 63, a former nun, and her sister Sonia. Its name is derived from "*casa*," which means house in Spanish, and "rap" for Restaurant and Alternative Products.

In Batangas, "*kasarap*" is a colloquial expression for something very delicious.

Organic

Most of the ingredients used at Casarap are naturally grown or organic. Emma herself harvests the vegetables from her garden, which has 10 varieties of herbs and spices.

The meat comes from organically grown hogs in Quezon and cattle in Batangas. Organic rice is served.

Emma owes her culinary skills to her mother. When she was still in the convent, she would write her mother and ask for recipes. "At least, I know what tastes good and what does not," she says.

A pinch of her creativity helps her in the kitchen. "I experiment," she says, referring to the restaurant's specialties like cassava fritters (*okoy*) with ice cream and *lambanog* (distilled coconut wine) as syrup.

The *lambanog*, served with the dessert or sold in bottles, comes from "*unang hango*" (first harvest), said to be the purest and strongest.

Casarap also offers corn-squash soup, *puso* salad (banana blossom salad with vinegared fish) and vegetable salad with blue ternate.

"Everybody serves salad, but many appreciate our dressing," Emma says. Her secret recipe? "Different spices, herbs and the right amount of sour, salty and sweet taste," she says.

No fine dining

With a small staff of six, Casarap remains a refined yet casual restaurant-cum-gift shop. "Nothing formal here, but all fun dining," Emma describes the service.

Guests are reminded to bring their plates and utensils to one area, and "they appreciate it," Emma says. Drinking water is self-service.

Among the customers are movie personalities, tourists and divers heading for the Anilao beaches in Batangas.

"It is a good sign that the old customers keep coming back," Emma adds. This means that they are pleased with their experience at Casarap, she says.

Casarap also has a prayer room where customers are not allowed to eat but are definitely encouraged to relax and reflect.

For nature lovers, the restaurant overlooks the Malaking Tubig River and has a 133-step stairway leading to the riverbanks.

The gift shop displays Emma's handicraft items for sale. These including dried leaves and flowers, paintings and pottery.

One of her remarkable works is the Filipino clay version of the *belen* (Nativity scene). Emma says the concept is inspired by an old friend in the convent, featuring St. Joseph who is hanging diapers and characters in typical native costumes.

A practice of vow

Emma left the convent with other nuns at the height of martial law during the Marcos dictatorship and settled in a family-owned farm in Tiaong, Quezon. Taking with her the congregation's vow to serve women, she decided to help them and the poor in the villages.

Also, "we wanted to live a life where we produce our needs directly," she adds.

In 1998, her brother became very ill and decided to give her back a piece of inherited property in San Jose, Batangas. She remembers him dissuading her to venture into business and wanting her to sell the lot instead.

But Emma took the road less traveled. "I want to enjoy life. I don't want to be just dependent on the money in the bank."

The 1,000-square-meter lot was converted into a vegetable garden and a small breakfast and snack house. Emma considered the place her way of thanking people who had helped her through a successful pituitary gland operation by gathering them here and giving them her handmade gifts.

Another reason was her being a member of the Susi Foundation, an environmentalist nongovernment organization. Emma realized that the place was a good spot for the group to monitor the pollution in the rivers of San Jose.

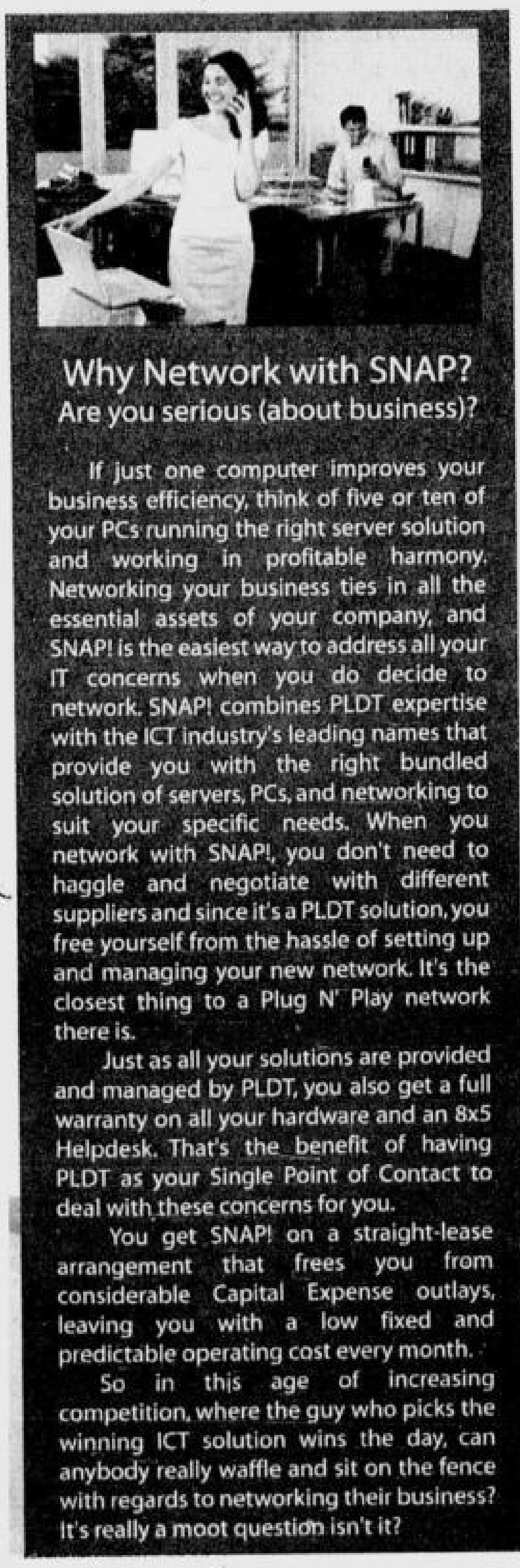
Far from retiring

Everyday, Emma wakes up at 4 a.m., spends time for Zen meditation, and heads straight to her garden for "a partnership with God." She never liked gardening before and always managed to escape the task in the convent, she says.

Until she was exposed to activism, she was able to convince herself that "it is important to go back to the soil."

At least twice a week, she goes to Tiaong to supervise the six-hectare farm and fishpond of the foundation which she currently heads. Susi promotes organic farming and develops the "slow food movement" (contrary to "fast food" or artificially produced food).

Emma is also developing a bonsai park for Sonia in San Jose, a 15-minute drive from Casarap. When the park is completed, she may also serve Casarap dishes there.



What You Don't Know Is Hurting You

For over two thousand years, mankind has been carrying out his business without the aid of electronic networks. One may be tempted to assume that we can continue doing business without the hassle of integrating more technology into the system. Pen-and-paper record keeping and physical delivery of information has been tried, tested, and abused over the years. The telephone and fax turned everything over its head in only good ways; it was the same case for the computer. Today the complexity and difficulty of converged network systems can be daunting, as can be the price.

But while you may think you are doing fine, you are losing out in profits to other, more efficient competitors -- losing in ways you may not even know about. In today's rapid-paced world, even technologies such as faxes and regular voice-services are rendered obsolete by current trends, and you can forget about turning back to hand-driven methods of accounting and communications. Losses to the tune of 100 billion USD plague companies worldwide simply because of bad systems design, according to a study by Nielsen. Inefficiency; employee productivity squandered on mindless, repetitive tasks, missed opportunities, capital wasted on maintaining islands of systems that overlap imprudently all of these add up to major losses.

One way to describe the world today is to call it information-intensive. And having access -- quick access -- to relevant information about your business, and being able to distribute that information to all your stakeholders is vital to surviving in the market. In this way orders can be taken and processed quickly, and therefore acted upon. If uncertainties arise, an answer can quickly be acted on instead of analysis-paralysis. Better-informed decisions are more-profitable decisions. And decisions made without vital information can be disastrous.

What you have to consider is more than cost. Your better-equipped competitors may be racing past you in terms of growth and productivity, and it is getting harder and harder to play catch-up. In today's fast-paced, highly-competitive market, you simply cannot afford to lose any edge you have over competitors. Only a custom-fitted, highly effective information and communication technology (ICT) solution is a definite advantage to any kind of business. And more kinds of businesses are looking to this solution.

Nothing has really changed: reliable communications is a constant business need. PLDT, realizing this, began putting together a package to offer exactly this to businesses of all sizes, but without the complexities and costs inherent in setting up such an advanced network. It comes down to a question of specialization. Obviously, companies specialize in things other than communications networks. Their time is better spent attending to their core competencies. It makes more sense for them to ask someone who is already an expert at managing communications networks to handle it for them. It is more cost-effective than the alternative, committing resources such as employee time and effort, and capital for buying all the equipment necessary, into setting one up for yourself or doing without a network altogether.

SNAP! (Simplified Networks on Auto Pilot), PLDT's newest offering seeks to minimize costs and maximize gains for companies in need of either a whole new IT infrastructure or wishing to augment their current set-up. Set-up and maintenance is attended to by PLDT staff. Equipment is leased, not sold, to minimize capital expenses down to a small set-up fee, and to grant flexibility to the clients in regards to fast-paced technologies. Once needs expand further, adding in new components can be done in a snap -- companies can choose from an array of hardware models available under the offering. And all the client has to do is use their new integrated network, without worrying about the details. They can leave that up to PLDT.

The name says it all: networks are simplified for their clients.

If you are not prepared to network, success may hurt.

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So in this age of increasing competition, where the guy who picks the winning ICT solution wins the day, can anybody really waffle and sit on the fence with regards to networking their business? It's really a moot question isn't it?

ZENAIDA [illegible] vice president for corporate affairs of Standard Chartered Bank, gives Vitamin A drops to children of the village of Bulanao in Tabuk City, Kalinga. ELMER KRISTIAN DALIGOY

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

BUSINESS *Monday*

Vitamin A vaccination drive in full swing

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BALBALAN, KALINGA—ALL THAT Geraldine Balao-as wants is for her year-old-son Gregory to have a bright future.

That was why the 28-year-old mother patiently joined the queue of parents who brought their children, as young as 17 months, to receive Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) from health workers in the farming village of Balbalasang here.

Gregory was one of the 10,000 children in the Cordillera who recently received VAS under the "Seeing is Believing" campaign of Standard Chartered Bank, the Helen Keller International (HKI) and the Department of Health.

The campaign aims to eliminate blindness and malnutrition among children in remote areas, said Zenaida Iglesias, the bank's senior vice president for corporate affairs.

The Cordillera, according to Iglesias, has the lowest coverage of VAS among the regions, which makes

VITAMIN/ B3-2

Giving overseas Filipinos a helping hand

NEARLY every Filipino has a friend or relative working and living overseas. The families of approximately eight million Filipinos overseas are benefiting from the over $14 billion in remittances this year. As much as it is a key driver of the economy, working abroad is part and parcel of Filipino family life.

The stories are familiar to most of us. The nurse who works long hours in North America battling loneliness and exhaustion in order to keep siblings at school back home. A contract worker in the Middle East or a seaman facing the hazards of maritime travel, enduring family separation in exchange for a better life. Finally, there's the doctor who becomes a nurse in lieu of better work opportunities.

Life apart from family is difficult enough for OFWs. The one thing they want to be sure of is that their hard-earned money safely reaches their loved ones back home. Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. (Metrobank), the country's largest bank, takes this need to heart, designing products and services that provides better value for the OFW and his beneficiaries.

Fast, safe, and reliable. The bank has long been known for providing fast and convenient service to overseas Filipinos wherever they are. Through services like Superbilis Padala, an online real time remittance service, a Filipino abroad can send remittances back home in a matter of seconds. An added service is the text messaging system that informs the beneficiary that money has been remitted. Plus, Metrobank offers superior convenience to remitters abroad through its global network comprising eight foreign branches, 27 remittance offices, 40 remittance tie-ups, and more than a thousand correspondent banks in 21 countries.

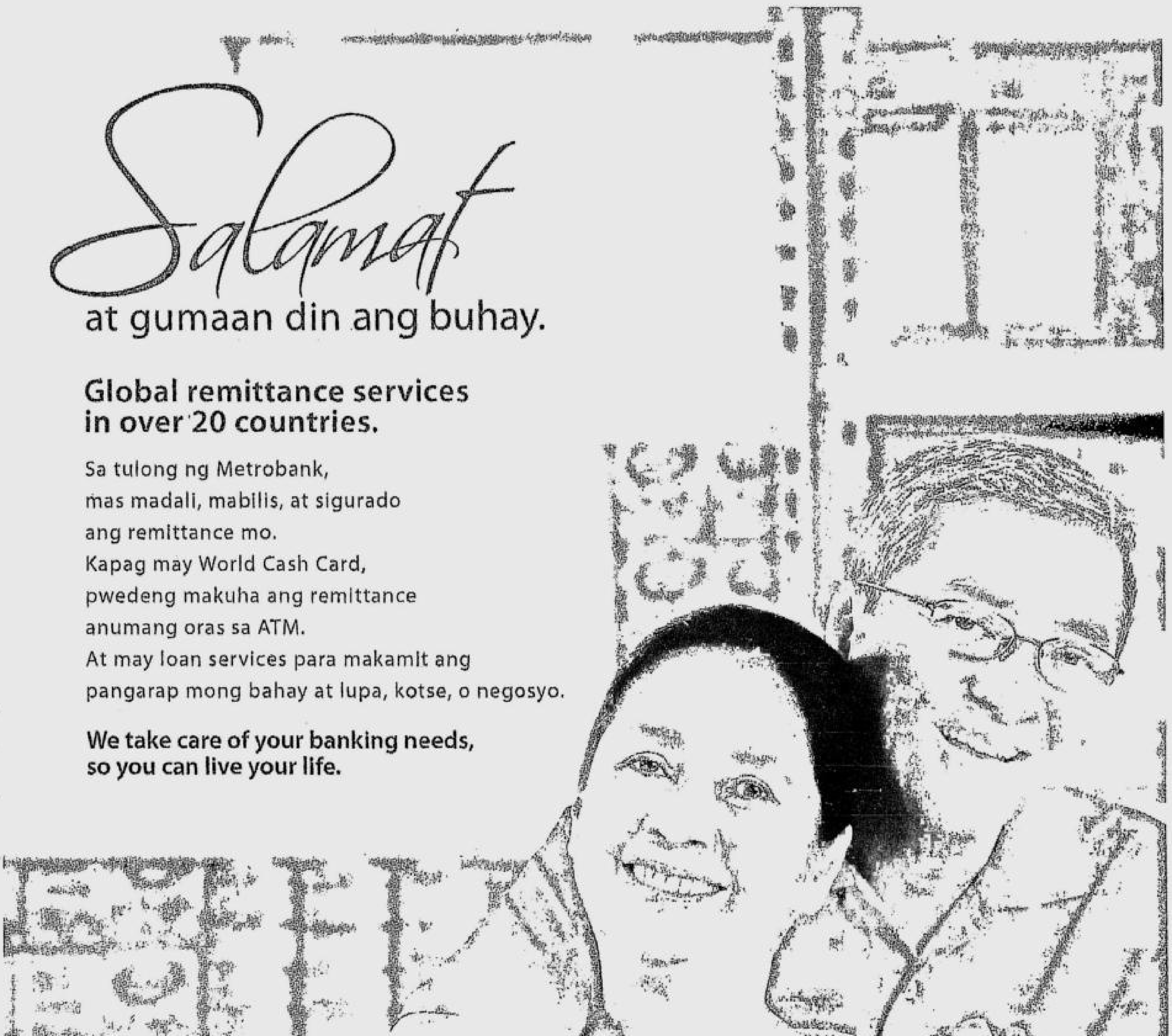
Better products for beneficiaries. Recognizing that OFWs needs are also evolving, Metrobank continues to introduce new products and services that are in tune with the times. For instance, the World Cash Card offers superior convenience to beneficiaries by getting remittance through over 7,000 ATM terminals all over the country. In addition, the beneficiary can take advantage of all the conveniences that a Metrobank ATM card can offer like paying bills over the ATM and using the card to pay for purchases at Bancnet-accredited merchants.

More services with added value. As the profile of Filipinos working abroad changes, new services are being offered by the Bank for their changing lifestyle and increasing spending capacity. Metrobank has introduced bundled car and housing loan packages for remittance beneficiaries. Through this innovative approach, the Bank helps OFWs and their families realize their dreams and higher goals for a better life.

The Bank also continues to extend its services through partnerships with institutions that help OFWs like PAG-IBIG (formerly known as Home Development Mutual Fund). By signing up PAG-IBIG in its bills payment facility, Filipinos abroad located in Italy, Singapore and Hong Kong can now pay monthly PAG-IBIG membership contributions, housing or multi-purpose loan payments.

Well aware of the hardships that accompany living and working overseas, Metrobank makes it a point to actively support and connect with Filipino communities abroad. Assistance through financial literacy programs and information drive on savings and good investment choices are being extended by the Bank.

While Filipinos working abroad may never truly feel at home until they are reunited with their families, Metrobank offers familiarity of home. The Bank helps by being a reliable financial partner that fellow Filipinos can count on for a better life.



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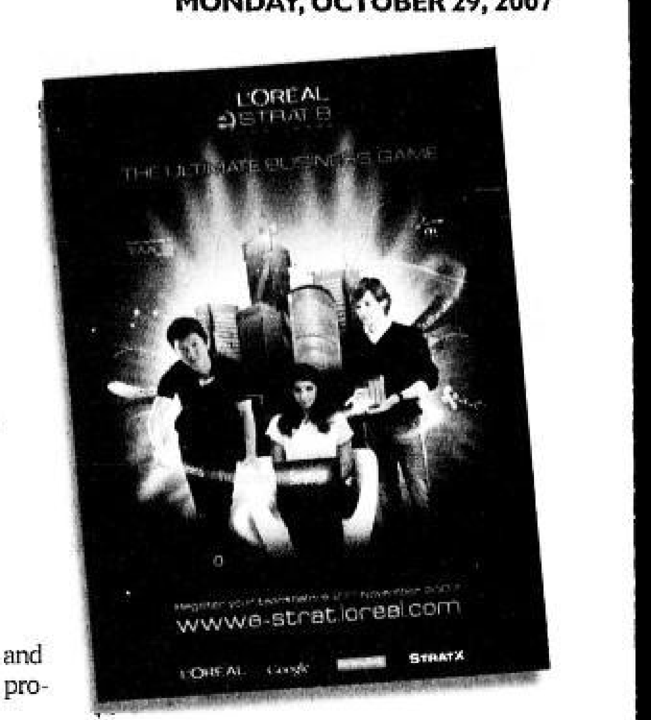
Online contest helps cosmetics company lure talent, raise profile



By Daxim L. Lucas

COMPETING FOR QUALITY management talent in the country's employment pool is not easy.

As it is, the task of attracting the best managers is difficult given that most graduates instinctively gravitate toward established marketing powerhouses like Procter & Gamble and Unilever.

This task is even more challenging for international cosmetics company L'Oréal, which also has to struggle against being typecast as a "girls only" company.

Strategy game

"The challenge for us is to be able to hire more talent," L'Oréal's human resources manager Arvin Crisol said in an interview. "We want the talent out there to take a closer look at our company."

The solution for the firm was to launch a business strategy game for college or graduate students enrolled in business courses from schools all over the country.

By doing so, Crisol said the company hoped to be able to attract more management talent from a wider pool while simultaneously raising the public's awareness of the company and its products.

L'Oréal is, after all, a global brand with strong market presence abroad, but has struggled to keep up with its competition in the local market, which continues to prefer American or Japanese cosmetics brands.

"We launched this business game called the L'Oréal e-Strat Challenge basically aimed at students," he said.

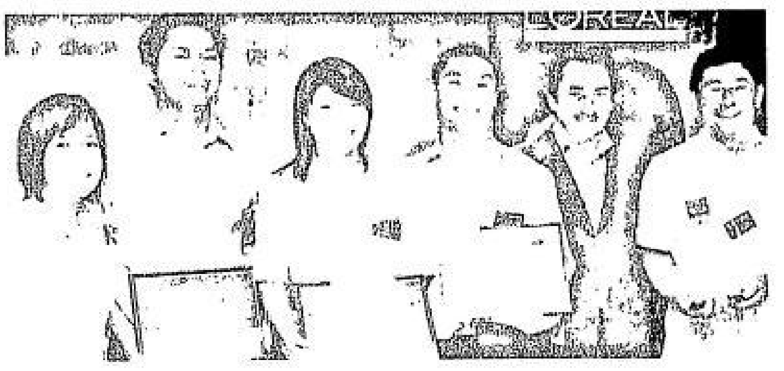
"We wanted to show them that they could go beyond beauty products in this company."

The e-Strat Challenge is an online business and strategy competition for business students, providing them with the opportunity to be in the virtual driver's seat of a leading global cosmetics company.

According to the company, student contestants act as general managers of a beauty industry company with an international portfolio of products.

Each team composed of three students will manage the company for a simulated period of three years.

Launched in 2000, the e-Strat Challenge was meant to help students understand the cosmetics business and industry.


PHILIPPINE grand winner, Team Pilote from Ateneo, with L'Oréal officials

Since its launch, over 177,000 students from over 2,200 schools have registered and joined the competition.

About 230 e-Strat players have joined L'Oréal around the world as employees after joining the contest.

Big prizes

In the Philippines, Crisol said that five former student contestants have gone on to join L'Oréal's team.

What's in it for the participants?

Apart from the prospect of future employment, the top three teams in the Philippines (students and their partner professors) get to win an adventure trip to Boracay, an overnight stay in a 5-star hotel, and fine dining experience in a restaurant.

The Philippine team that tops the Southeast Asia Zone gets to go on a tour of Paris, France, while the eventual international winner will have the opportunity to visit any country of their choice for one whole week.

Now on its eighth year in the Philippines, Crisol said that the number of participants has been increasing, from 12 in 2001 to 126 in 2006.

Last year, the Philippines had the most semifinalists with 22 teams making it to the top 300 teams in the region.

"Things are certainly looking up, and I predict that the next international winner will come from our country," he said, adding that his optimism is boosted by the enthusiasm of the students and the support of their professors.

"It takes enthusiasm, strategy and teamwork to do well in e-Strat," the L'Oréal official said. "With our students' familiarity with online competition, business aptitude and competitive spirit, we have an advantage. If you include the guidance and support of the professors, then we can certainly compete with the best students in the world."

Bridging program

Last year, the competition was awarded the Technology-Enhanced Program Accreditation by the European Foundation of Management Development.

"This essentially means that on a worldwide level, e-Strat has been recognized as a program bridging the professional and educational worlds and providing an innovative and rich learning experience to the students who participate," Crisol said.

"For students with one more year or one more semester left of studies, the L'Oréal e-Strat Challenge is definitely a tool that would synthesize all their business learning and assess their competitive advantage as they prepare for the corporate world," he said.

(Business students interested in joining the L'Oréal e-Strat Challenge can contact Arvin Crisol at 09175748421, 6320280 loc. 202 or acrisol@ph.loreal.com.)

Flourishing Filipino furniture

By Blooey Singson
Contributor

"SILID NI MALAKAS" features a traditional Filipino *silla perezosa* which borrows the wings of the classic wing chair.

IN THE GLOBAL MARKET FOR FURniture, the Philippines is touted to be the Milan of Asia. The unparalleled design and craftsmanship of locally manufactured furniture pieces have earned for Philippine furniture a prime spot in the world market.

The Philippine furniture industry ranks fourth in the Philippine's top merchandise exports, with sales amounting to $86.27 million, according to the National Statistics Office's Merchandise Export Performance released in June 2007, posting a 20-percent growth from $71.87 million in June 2006.

Wood and rattan products continue to remain as the major product lines exported, collectively comprising more than three fourths of total industry export in the first half of 2007, to top export markets United States ($167,322,081), Japan, ($23,692,979), Australia ($6,948,424), Great Britain and Northern Ireland ($6,062,841), and Italy ($5,912,864).

The Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines (CFIP) remains one of the industry's strongest business support organizations. Established in 1966 by nine furniture manufacturers and exporters, this nonstock, nonprofit organization is the national association of companies, chapters and affiliates working together for the mutual benefit and the sustainable growth of the Philippine furniture industry.

With over 105 regular members, 35 associate members and 12 chapters all over the Philippines, the CFIP serves as the catalyst and advocate of the local furniture industry, striving to achieve sustainable growth and global competitiveness consistent with the individual needs and aspirations of its growing membership.

"Members learn from one another and collaborate because we share common concerns. We ensure the production of pieces that are excellent in quality, exemplary in design and craftsmanship, and distinctive in value, and guarantee the practice of ethical, sound and responsible principles of business management," explains CFIP vice president for chamber development Joy Cancio.

This October, CFIP collaborates with another industry leader, the Philippine School of Interior Design, in an exhibit entitled "Forty, Filipino and Fabulous" ("F3") at the Paseo Center (Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeño Street, Makati). The exhibit, celebrating PSID's 40th year anniversary, showcases Philippine furniture integrated into 19 masterfully designed and executed interior spaces, running from Sept. 30 to Oct. 31.

"ENTRADA" features a butaka lounge chair.

Growing concerns

CFIP underscores that the main strength of the Philippine furniture industry is design, especially pieces that incorporate indigenous materials.

Despite this edge and the constant growth of the industry, however, local exports are not doing as well as their counterparts in other Asian countries.

"About 10 years ago, price was not an issue," says Cancio. "Filipino talent and craftsmanship has allowed us to demand a higher price for our pieces. In recent years, however, we've seen improving design in other Asian countries, at more competitive prices. Thus, there is a need for the local industry to continually improve design, quality and product development to become more globally competitive."

Although the furniture industry continues to experience double digit growth, the Private Enterprise Accelerated Resource Linkages (Pearl) 2 project (funded by the Canadian International Development Agency) 2005 State of the Sector Report (http://www.cfip. org.ph/industrynumber.html accessed 03 Sept. 2007) shows that the local furniture industry is still heavily dependent on the United States market for foreign sales. In the vast US market, the country's furniture export is only about one percent of total US furniture imports.

Furthermore, furniture manufacturing in the Philippines also remains to be a very highly labor intensive industry.

An estimated 15,000 companies employ about 481,500 direct workers and another 300,000 subcontractors. About 98 percent of these firms are micro, small and medium-sized operations.

"Currently, there is a need to train more woodworkers and furniture carpenters. Most of the manufacturers are involved in machine-based production, and very few remain of the old generations of furniture makers. It will be a shame if this tradition is not passed down to the younger generations," Cancio reports. "We're also losing some of our best designers to design companies abroad, even to our competitors in China, Malaysia and Indonesia."

Positive outlook

The Pearl 2 Project recommends that the local furniture industry focus on getting back lost market shares and developing untapped markets to curtail a decline in exports.

For furniture makers, Pearl 2 also recommends improving product competitiveness, and paying closer attention to the domestic market because the imports of furniture from low cost manufacturers abroad has led to intensified competition.

Aside from these, Cancio emphasizes the need for more government support.

"The industry has been getting support from agencies like Department of Trade and Industry and the Export Development Fund," she reports. "But there are areas of the industry that still need more government support, perhaps in the form of improved policies for exporters, or the availability of technical assistance and loans for capital investment like those in competitor countries."

Cancio remains positive that the Philippine furniture industry still has a lot of potential. "The continuous growth of the industry, despite the problems, shows us that there is a lot more we can tap into."

She points out the Filipino advantage in design. "Filipino furniture is known for a wide range of designs. Current trends in local furniture design are dark finishes, light upholstery in Victorian or floral designs, contemporary shapes, indigenous materials (abaca, sinamay, shells and the like), seeds and twigs laminated on resin for tabletops and cabinets, and crushed bamboo for furniture and paneling."

"KORONA" features a traditional Filipino sofa.

Cancio also cites world-renowned furniture designers as examples.

"Budji Layug's designs have been carried by several Italian companies, and have been featured in Architectural Digest. Kenneth Cobonpue's furniture has been used in Hollywood films such as Ocean's Thirteen; some of his pieces are even owned by Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, two of the most internationally acclaimed personalities of our time. Design is really in our blood, and the industry will surely stand to benefit if we focus our attention on our capabilities."

Because of the innate Filipino aptitude for aesthetics and design, Cancio emphasizes the need for new blood in the design industry.

"The industry is always in need of new ideas and new designs," Cancio concludes. "With the Forty, Filipino, and Fabulous exhibit, we not only hope to look forward to seeing Filipino furniture showcased in ingenious interior design, we also hope to inspire the students to branch out into furniture design, and to use their talent to make a difference in the Filipino furniture industry."

Vitamin A vaccination ...

From page B3-1

children here vulnerable to malnutrition and poor vision.

Vitamin A deficiency is one of the major causes of childhood blindness.

"We aim to help 10 million people across 20 countries worldwide until 2010. The Philippines was chosen as one of the beneficiaries. We want to draw attention to our country to protect our children from unnecessary deaths," she said.

High mortality rates

The Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Sierra Leone have high mortality rates among children under five years old. They also have high rates of Vitamin A deficiency and malnutrition, Iglesias said.

The VAS campaign started in 2003 in Bangladesh, where many of the children are blind due to the lack of vitamin A.

"We started with a small fund-raising for cataract operation in Bangladesh, which at that time only cost $25. When it became successful, we decided to do a worldwide campaign to make a difference because we saw the same cases in India, Nepal and South Africa. We committed to raise $5 million until 2006 to help save a million [people]," Iglesias said.

The fund-raising exceeded the target amount and in three years, the campaign restored the sight of a million people, she said.

Shifting priority

It was this undertaking which inspired Standard Chartered Bank to save more as it shifted to preventing blindness by providing VAS to children, she said.

The Cordillera has a VAS coverage of only 69 percent, the lowest among the country's 17 regions, said Ellen Villate, country director of the HKI, an international humanitarian organization dedicated to saving the sight and lives of poor people around the world.

Dr. Myrna Cabotaje, Cordillera health director, said providing Vitamin A not only saves eyesight but a host of other diseases because it helps prevent malnutrition.

"That is why it is important for the mothers to take their children to community health centers for Vitamin A supplementation because this is not an over-the-counter drug. This should be taken twice a year by growing children, from six months to seven years old," said Cabotaje.

Balbalan Mayor Allen Jesse Mangaoang said his town could serve as a model community when it comes to VAS because the local government has prioritized health over infrastructure projects.

"In Balbalan, we have a 100-percent rate of immunization among children. We want our community to serve as a model to inspire other communities to prioritize their health programs. A community with good roads and infrastructure is nothing if the health of its people is poor [and neglected]," said Mangaoang.

Flordeliza Wadwadan, 32, a farmer, said that she will make sure that her six children undergo regular medical examination and receive VAS.

"My dream for my children is for them to finish their studies and be productive citizens. I can help them attain this by making sure that they are healthy," Wadwadan said.

Coffee farming a tradition for Cavite family

APOLONIO BELAMIDE OF Silang, Cavite has planted and traded Robusta coffee for more than 30 years.

Like most of his relatives and neighbors in Barangay Pook, Belamide is a second-generation coffee farmer and has been one throughout his adult life.

On an average year, his farm, combined with those of his siblings, produces 300 metric tons of green coffee beans (GCB), making it the top coffee producer of the province, if not of Luzon.

His combined family coffee farm spanning over a hundred hectares employs more than 1,000 workers in his *barangay.* Neighboring farmers and small farm owners look up to his family for coffee farming and trading advice, and at times, for production capital.

In fact, Belamide is one of the reasons why some of the area's coffee farmers still keep their farms.

"The temptation for these farmers to sell their farm lots to rich families in Manila looking for vacation homes is really great," says Belamide in vernacular. "So we do whatever it takes to keep them farming, even if it means granting them loans without interest or profit."

The farmers of Pook have no cooperative, they also get little support from any government group.

They turn to Nestlé for the assistance it has been extending.

"It's good that Nestlé is always there to support us, giving free training and seminars on coffee farming," says Belamide, who has been selling to Nestlé, the producer of the country's number one instant soluble coffee, since 1978.

Belamide stresses, however, that Nestlé's most important contribution to the Filipino farmers is its pricing and eight-hour payment policy, which guarantees farmers payment within eight hours after delivery of the coffee beans.

Belamide and his siblings grew up working in a small coffee farm started by their father from his earnings in transporting coconuts with carabao carts.

In 1974, Belamide, the fourth of the siblings, finished BS Commerce in Manila but opted to settle back in Silang.

He married a coffee farmer's daughter and they started a coffee farm of their own.

Twenty-nine years of hard work has helped the Belamides purchase a house and vehicles as well as put up two coffee mills and warehouses.

It has also enabled them to send two of their four children to study in the United States.

Belamide reveals that although the soil is not that fertile as before and that there are occasional pest problems in Silang, there is never a better time to plant coffee than today.

"Yes, there are problems in planting coffee but there's always a solution," says Belamide. "In fact, I am talking to the head of Nestlé's agricultural department now for assistance in the rejuvenation of our coffee trees and producing organic fertilizer."

Belamide reveals that his youngest daughter, who is still in high school, has taken interest in the family farm and hints that she may take up agriculture instead of medicine after all.

The good news is she doesn't have to ride a carabao cart to the farm: It's a choice between their two-year-old pick-up or an SUV.

THE BELAMIDES grant other farmers loans without interest or profits so they can keep their farms.

MOVEMENT

New leadership for GHD in the Philippines

LEADING INTERNATIONAL PROfessional services company GHD has appointed Fraser Watt as Philippines Country Manager. Watt is based in GHD's Manila office.

Watt is an environmental chemist with over 25 years experience in the scientific and environmental consulting industries in Australia and Europe. He has significant experience in environmental due diligence, contaminated sites investigation and rehabilitation, and industrial site appraisal and assessment. He joined GHD's Melbourne office in 1996, and took over as manager of GHD's Geelong office in 2004. Under Watt's leadership, the Geelong office grew from two staff to 35 in less than three years.

Watt plans to increase GHD's presence in the Philippines by expanding staff numbers and introducing new service lines including mining and resources consultancy, and architectural services to support the Philippines' burgeoning tourism and leisure industries. He also aims to cement GHD's strong reputation in provision of International Development Assistance projects, as well as traditional offerings such as civil infrastructure services, water engineering and environmental services.

Says Watt, "It's the right time to grow our business both in the Philippines and in surrounding countries. Our people are highly skilled and motivated, with strong technical experience in areas including International Development Assistance. As well as leading local projects, our Philippines office lends its services to significant GHD projects in South East Asia, the Middle East and increasingly to Australia. I plan to increase GHD's services in the Philippines, increasing the development opportunities for our Philippines staff and bringing a new range of services to our clients."

Watt takes over the role of Dean McIntyre, who moves on to a key leadership role at GHD's Victoria Operating Centre, Australia.

Manalo, Quila appointed to PDIC Board

THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INsurance Corp. (PDIC) announced the appointment of J. Antonio M. Quila and Rogelio W. Manalo to the PDIC board of directors as private sector representatives.

Quila and Manalo took their oath before Finance Secretary and PDIC Chair Margarito B. Teves at the Department of Finance Complex in Manila.

Both directors have previously held various senior positions in the fields of banking and public administration.

Director Quila, an economist, development banker, and commercial banker, has a 25-year track record with the Asian Development Bank holding various managerial and directorship positions. He retired as the special advisor to the ADB president in 2003, as the highest ranking Fili pino officer in the ADB. During his stint with the bank, Quila managed its structuring and restructuring projects, operationalized reform programs, and conceived and implemented integrated operational strategies. He organized roadshows and fora to promote ADB assistance available to countries and represented ADB in formal high-level coordination meetings and policy dialogues.

Director Quila graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1965. He earned his Masters in Business Administration from the same university in 1971 and attended the Strategic Leadership Program at the Templeton College, Oxford University, United Kingdom in 1999.

Director Manalo has over 40 years of extensive experience in government service and banking. He has been appointed director and president of various government agencies such as the Philippine National Oil Commission Petro-Chemical Development Corp., Mimosa Golf & Country Club, Clark Development Corp. Services Inc., Clark Development Corp., Manpower Development and Youth Council, Board of Tourism and Travel, and Philippine College of Commerce. He was also an alternate member of the Committee on Preparations of the ADB from 1956-1966 and alternate member of the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of the Philippines from 1965-1966. He was a former governor of the Development Bank of the Philippines and served various positions in several private banks.

Director Manalo earned his Bachelor of Arts in Government and Post Graduate in Business Administration from George Washington University, Washington DC, USA.

Acision appoints new chief executive officer

ACISION HAS APPOINTED RORY Buckley as chief executive officer.

Acision, the messaging and charging company of choice for over 300 network operators and service providers worldwide, was formed in June 2007 following the purchase of LogicaCMG's Telecoms Products division for 256 million pounds ($525 million) by a consortia led by Atlantic Bridge and Access Industries.

Buckley joins Acision from Ericsson where his accomplishments over 30 years have seen him advance from technical trainee to top executive positions across EMEA, North America and Asia-Pacific, including tenures as executive vice president Middle East and Africa, executive vice president United States, and finally president and head of Ericsson, Northeast Asia.

Buckley took up the position as CEO last Oct. 1, taking over from Chris McDermott who left the company to pursue new opportunities.

Larry Quinn, chair of Acision said: "In acquiring Acision at the start of this year we demonstrated our belief in the potential for the messaging market and in Rory we believe we have found the right leader to take the company forward. We thank Chris for his hard work in driving the company to where it is today, and look forward to welcoming Rory to lead the team in Acision's next phase of consolidating its global market leadership as the experts in messaging and charging."

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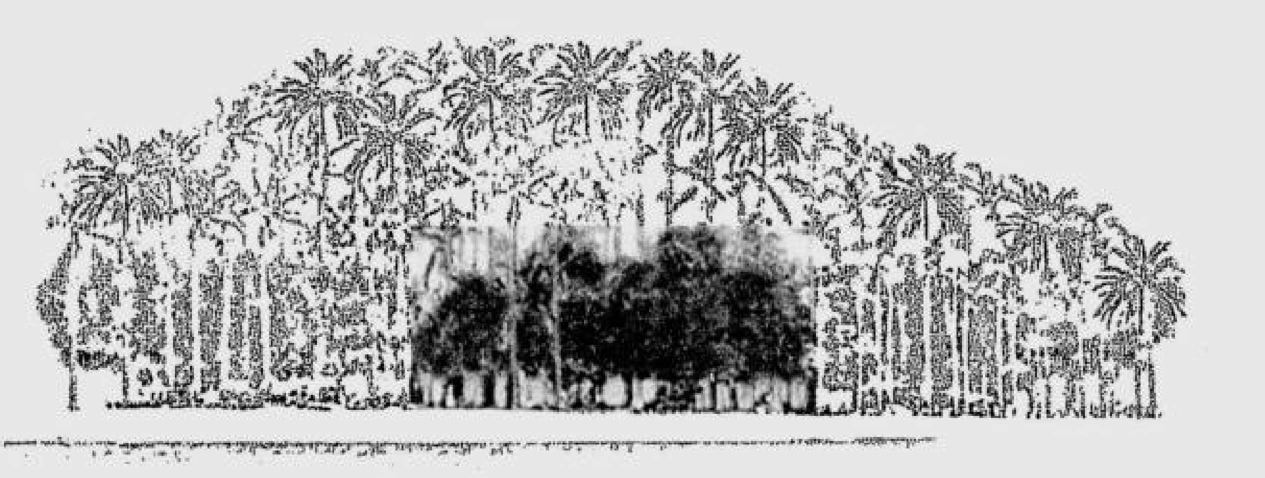

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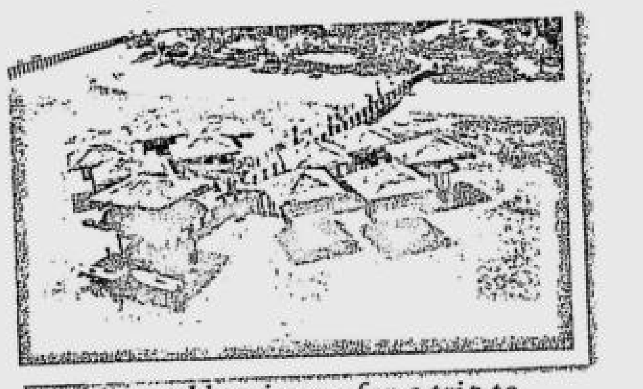

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City 1.3 S CVT	665,000	99,750	12,859	332,500	7,518
Jazz 1.3 S MT	650,000	97,500	12,679	325,000	7,459
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HONDA

Hot jobs: It's all about networking, says Cisco

By Riza T. Olchondra

SANDY Walsh

LUICHI Robles

THE LOCAL IT INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO grow. But guess what? It will not be sustainable without networking specialists, and their numbers are not growing fast enough—says networking giant Cisco Systems Inc.

So what do you do? Educate those with potential to go pro.

Topping Cisco's education agenda is the Cisco Certified Network Academy (CCNA) program.

The Network Academy trains IT students in specialized fields, specifically wireless networking, security networking and VoIP networking.

"Over the next 12 years, the top three networking skills needed are those for wireless, security, and VoIP (voice over the Internet) environments, and so we would like to focus on these," said Cisco Systems Philippines country manager Luichi Robles.

Data from an Asia-wide study by research firm International Data Corp. (IDC) showed that the Philippines alone already has a shortage of 1,300 skilled networking professionals.

The shortage will increase to 2,400 by 2009, representing a compound annual growth gap rate of 22 percent.

IDC said that there will be a shortage of 396,000 skilled networking professionals in Asia Pacific by 2009.

To bridge the gap, Cisco introduced the CCNA Discovery and CCNA Exploration programs.

Both are directed at high school and college students whose networking knowledge range from basic computer technical skills to advanced equipment networking.

Sandy Walsh, Cisco Regional Manager for Education Programs and Corporate Responsibility, said the CCNA Discovery program was more for students who want to work in small-office or home-office environments.

The CCNA Exploration program, on the other hand, is for those who have technical background, say engineering graduates who want to gain specific networking skills.

Both courses can be integrated directly into technical-vocational courses and degree courses in various colleges.

The Cisco Networking Academy program is a curriculum to help students and in-transition workers design, build and maintain computer networks.

The education program employs an e-learning model, using a combination of Web-based and instructor-led training along with laboratory work.

Under the program, students are prepared for industry-standard certifications such as Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP).

The networking academy program was launched in the Philippines in 1998.

Today, there are over 143 academies in the Philippines, with more than 116,000 students trained by 800 instructors.

"We recognize that 'one size does not fit all' and the Networking Academy needs to evolve to accommodate differences in student capabilities, goals and environments around the globe," Walsh said.

Power and banking seen as good buys

PROPERTY STOCKS ARE EXPECTED to be among the best buys for the coming year as these will benefit from the new credit cycle brought about by the low-interest environment.

Leading online brokerage firm CitisecOnline likewise expects the power and banking sectors to maintain their good ratings.

April Tan, head of CitisecOnline's research, recommends investing in the property sector because of the "increasing affordability of properties brought about by low interest rates, availability of lower down payments and longer payment terms."

"We expect the investment climate to continue to improve as corporate earnings continue to remain strong and market participation increases provided interest rates remain low and we don't experience any negative surprises from the US market," says Tan.

For investors torn between buying shares of IPOs or blue-chip stocks, she advised that whether buying an IPO or a blue-chip stock, you need to apply the discipline of analyzing the company first according to the prospects offered by the industry, future growth prospects of the firm, earning growth drivers and valuations.

COL periodically organizes stock market briefings and industry fora as part of its ongoing investor education program.

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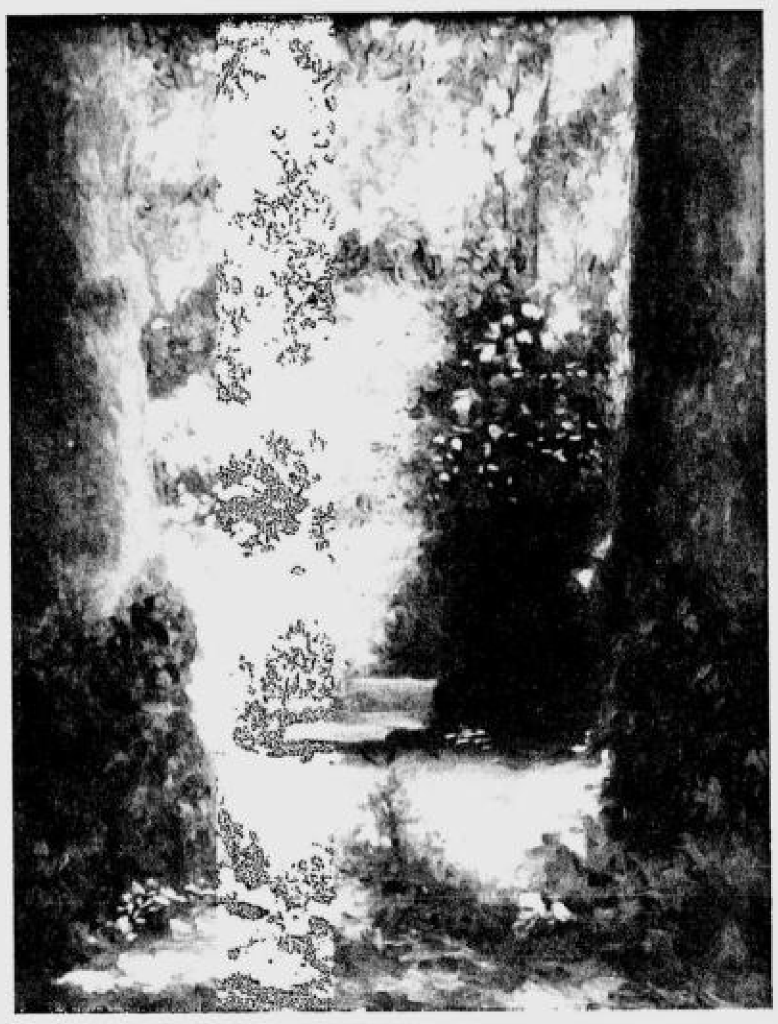


"BENCH and Two Large Trees, Bagatelle"

Stella Rojas' tender communions

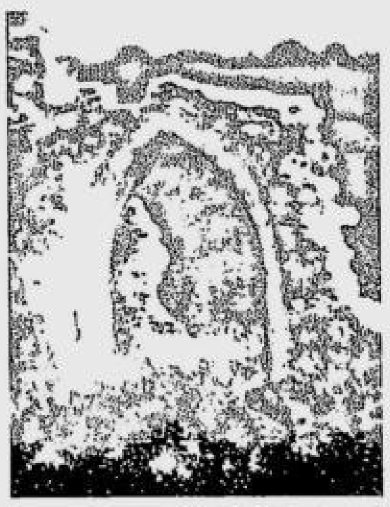
By Jessica Jalandoni Robillos
Contributor

IN FRANCE, ONLY THE ruins of English King Richard I's castle remain. Known as Couer de Leon or Lion Heart, he battled French monarch Philip II who sought to regain French territories in the 13th century.

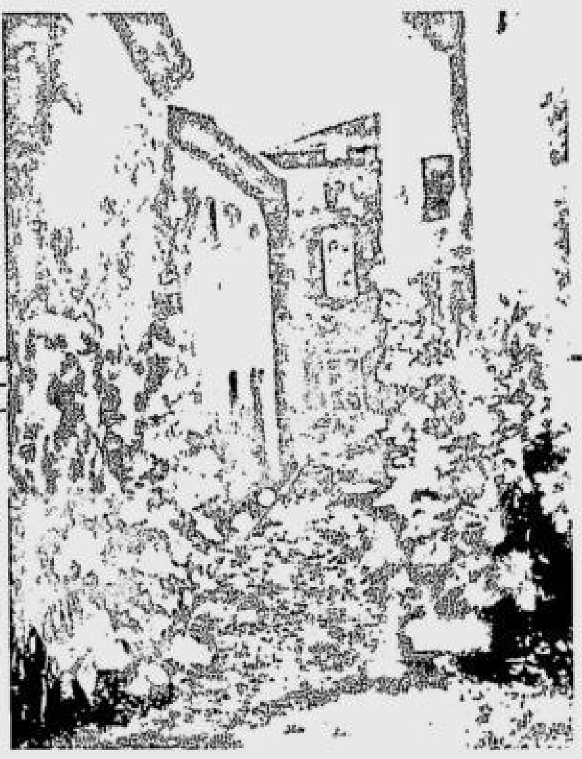
The sight has been chosen by Stella Rojas as one of her numerous subjects in her latest show, "French Passion," in Gallery Nine at the ArtWalk in Megamall (tel. 9108016).

As often as she could, Rojas hies off to France where she paints *plein* air, or takes photographs to inspire her paintings. The affinity with the country is not surprising—she was, after all, the first Filipino scholar at Ecole d'Art in Aix-en-Provence in 1993. Her last so-

STELLA/ C2



"CASTLE of Richard the Lionheart"



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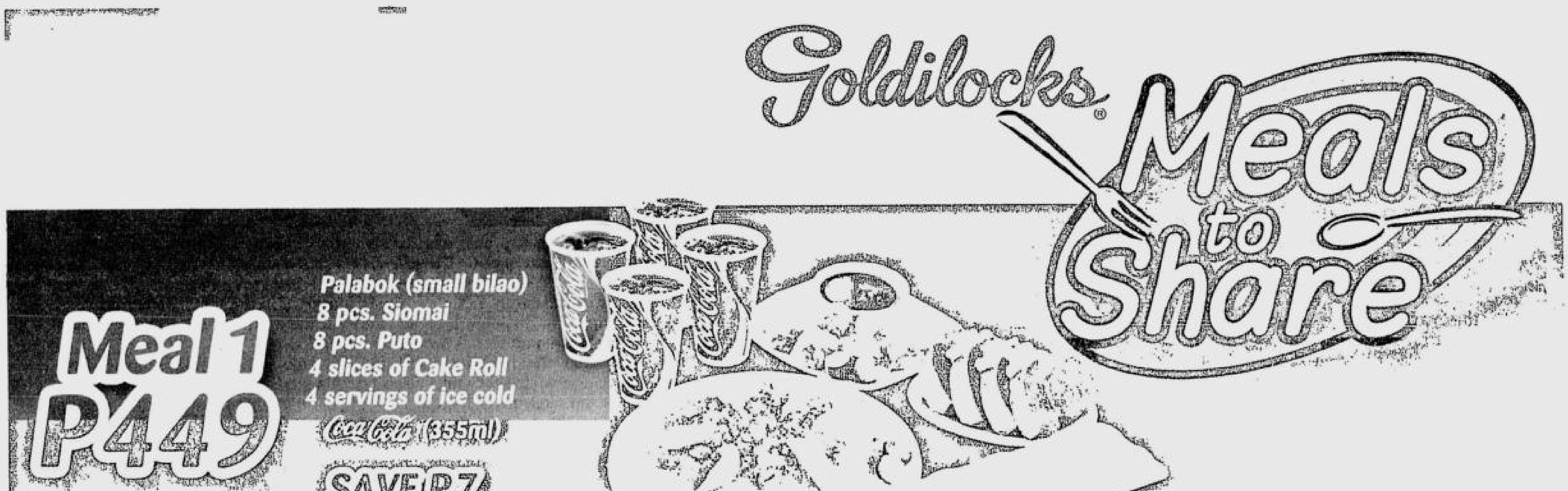

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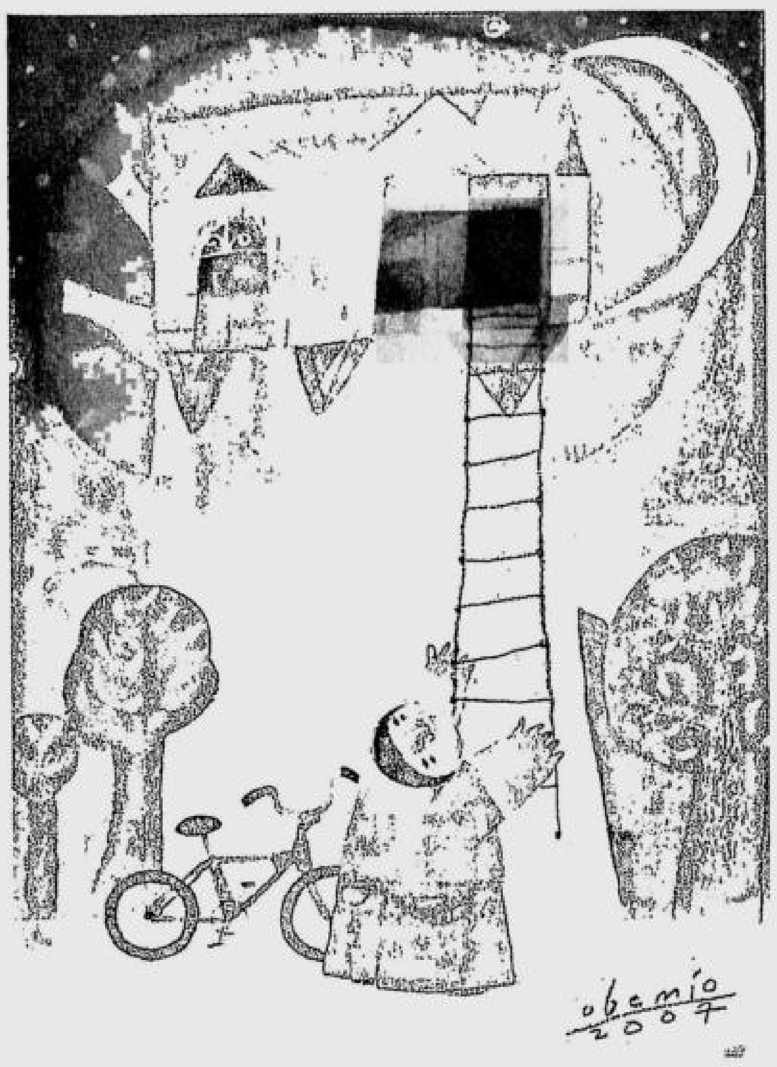
Praico and Obemio in visual duet

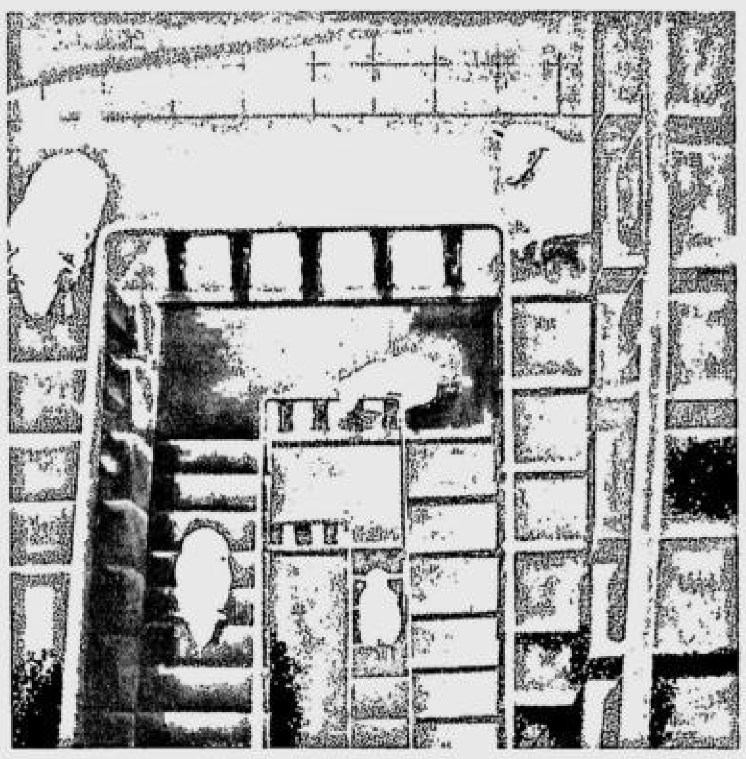


"PLAY" 2, by Roel Obemio

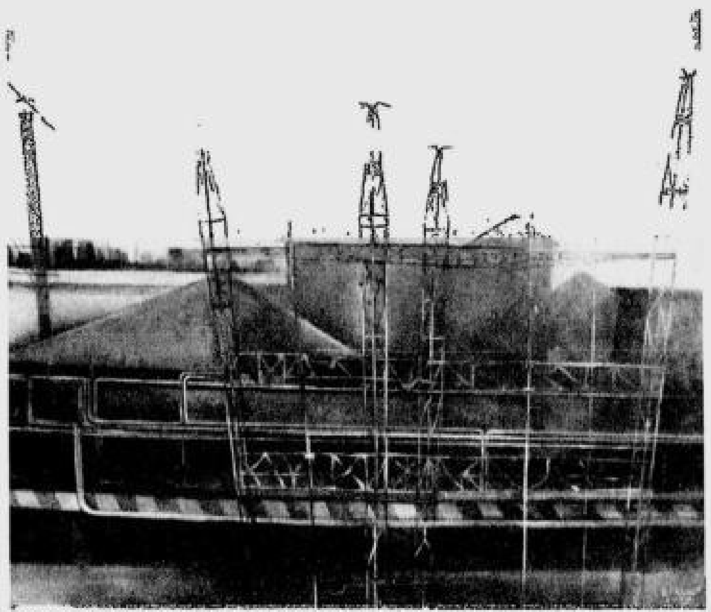
BRENDA PRAICO AND ROEL OBEMIO PRESENT THEIR "Recent Works" at the Library Wall of 1/of Gallery in Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Praico's oils of metaphorical sheep in the city and Obemio's corpulent yet light and dreamy subjects in watercolor make for subtle visual contemplation. Brenda Praico is a graduate of University of Sto. Tomas and Roel Obemio of University of the East. Both majored in Painting.

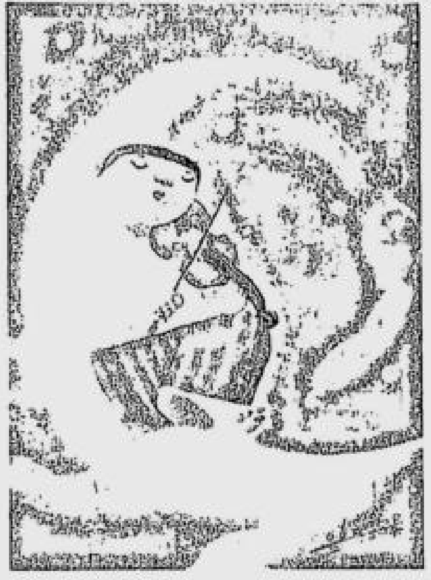
Call 9013152 for details.



"RACE to Greener Pastures," by Brenda Praico



"BALANCING Act" I, by Praico



"DREAMSCAPE" I, by Obemio

Delicious murals

MURAL IS ONE OF THE OLDEST and most resilient art forms in history, with some of its earliest examples traced back to prehistoric times. Murals and frescoes are accepted art forms that can be found somewhere in between fine art and house painting.

The mural gracing the walls of Congo Grille, a family restaurant and weekend place, has provided the venue with a reputation of serving delicious Filipino dishes set in an artistic ambiance.

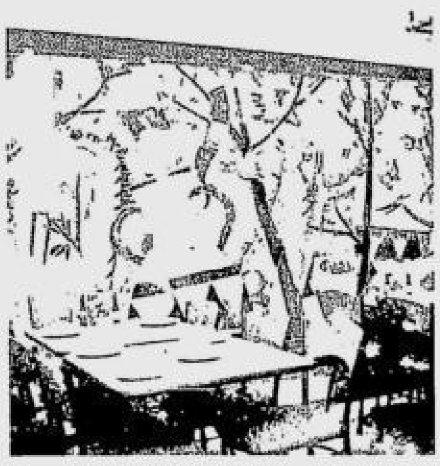
The restaurant has chosen an African-inspired mural to capture the jungle ambiance evoked by the name Congo Grille.

"The idea of transforming the interior of Congo Grille into real works of art was sparked by our desire to provide our customers with more than just a delicious meal. We want them to enjoy the ambiance of our restaurant and relish the excitement, the adventure and the captivating images of our murals, the way they enjoy our food," said marketing supervisor Carla Villanueva.

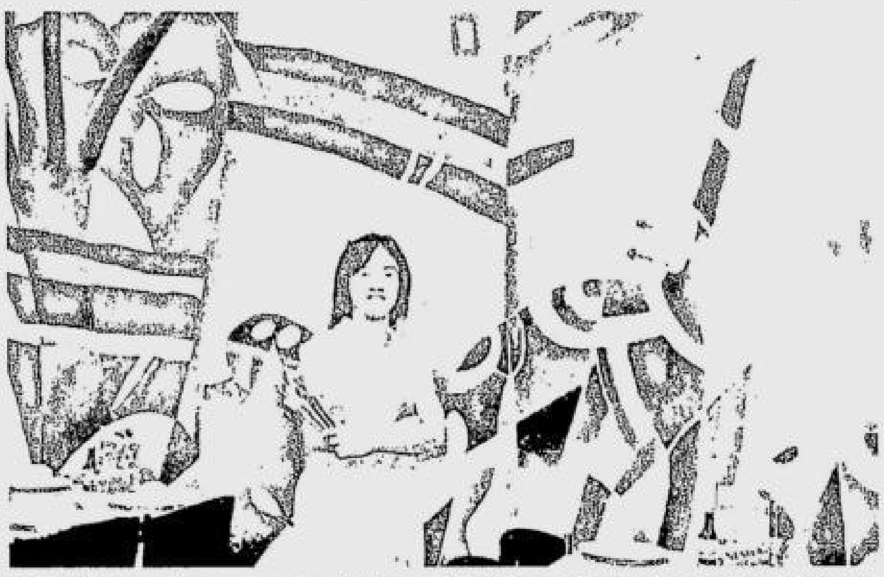
Tapped to create these modern masterpieces was Yasmin Sy Ong, a young and talented graphic designer and illustrator turned muralist, whose youthful approach helped provide a character of dynamism to the frescos.

Using design elements of African artifacts, such as masks, weapons, headgear and textile patterns and mixed in with the playful qualities of animals, people and bright colors to contrast the earth tones, Ong has succeeded to paint visuals that appeal to both young and old.

"The murals that Congo Grille wanted me to create were supposed to capture a rustic element of fun, color, texture, sense of place and visually captivating cues. This is what I strived to achieve in nearly every branch. But I added a bit of originality and uniqueness in each one, so no two Congo Grille murals are alike," said Ong.



MURAL at Congo Grille TriNoma showcases images rendered with a storybook feel, toning down the visuals so they become more appealing to family diners.



YASMIN Ong, the young muralist tapped by Congo Grille, stands in front of her towering masterpiece at Congo Grille Mall of Asia.

Panoramic

The results are works of art spanning several meters of wall space within each Congo Grille branch. In restaurants that have low ceilings, the murals are rendered in a more panoramic orientation to emphasize the width. But in others with more than ample wall space, vertical elements such as tree trunks were added to emphasize the size of the artwork.

The colors are determined by the ethnic motif, with orange, green, brown, red, black and white being prominent, and the other tones used sparingly as highlights or accents. The texture and blends produce images that are striking yet subdued, enticing the viewer to take a second look and catch all the details.

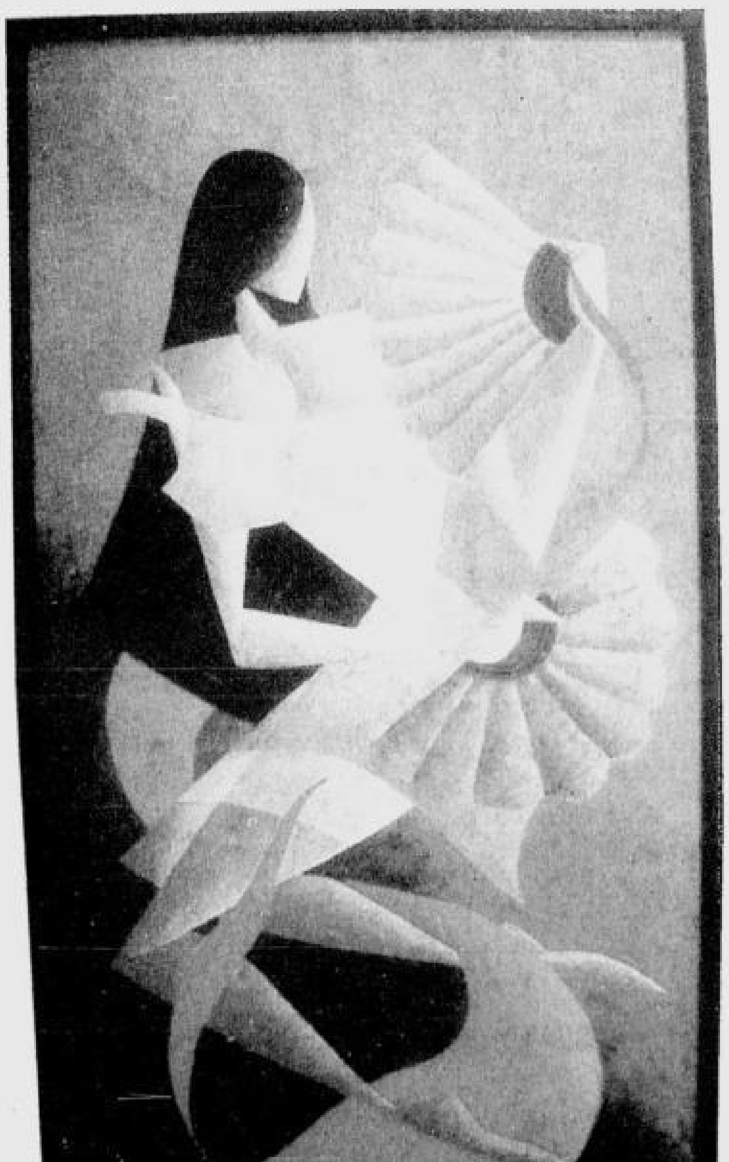
Even the floor of the restaurant depicts carved "animal tracks," providing the illusion that the animals depicted in the murals have come to life to leave their marks on the floors. Ethnic carved masks cap the entire artwork, with replica spears and potted plants added to help achieve the effect of art becoming reality.

Among the finest examples of the Congo Grille murals are those in the El Pueblo branch in Ortigas Center, SM Mall of Asia and SM San Fernando, Pampanga; SM Lazaro, SM Valenzuela, SM Clark, SM Fairview, Westgate-Alabang and TriNoma.

Call 4211189, 4372911; e-mail banguetsales@congogrille.com; or visit www.congogrille.com.

The antipodes of artistic expression

By Constantino C. Tejero



"SUMMER Dance," by Maia

A CLEAR CASE OF POlarity is Maia and Aaron Bautista's joint exhibit "Forms and Spaces," pieces in oil and mixed media on canvas, recently in Artistspace, 2/F, Glass Wing, Ayala Museum, Greenbelt Park, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

Even the exhibit's title hints at this artistic polarity—of positive form and negative space, the solid and the insubstantial, not to say the yin and the yang, or the respective maleness and femaleness of the artists. He thrives in near-monochrome and gestural technique, she in multicolor and neat drawing—no two artists could be more apart.

Finally, of course, there is the antipodal modes of representation of the figurative and the abstract, and of the precise line and the spontaneous brushstroke. In a paradoxical twist, Bautista represents the concrete (cityscape) with abstraction, while Maia tries to capture the fleeting and the insubstantial (movement, sound, breeze) through figuration.

Maia, who took up Fine Arts at Far Eastern University, says she has been influenced by the expressionism of Ang Kiukok and the Filipinism of Nemiranda.

Chiefly using a palette knife, she creates the female form with precisely drawn line and flat coloration to express her celebration of life. The pale blue of the fans accentuates the warm harmony of "Summer Dance" in the same way the vivid red of the dress and umbrella strongly contrasts the cool harmony of "Flutist" and "Cool Breeze."

We see traces of the spiky form and angular line of Ang Kiukok, but not his expressive use of color and more of the festive hues of Lamarroza. We see the flowing line of Nemiranda, but the cubist segmentation of space is more like Malang's. In all, this is art décoratif à la Zalameda.

On the other hand, Bautista, who studied Painting at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, says his approach to non-objective art approximates the method of De Kooning.

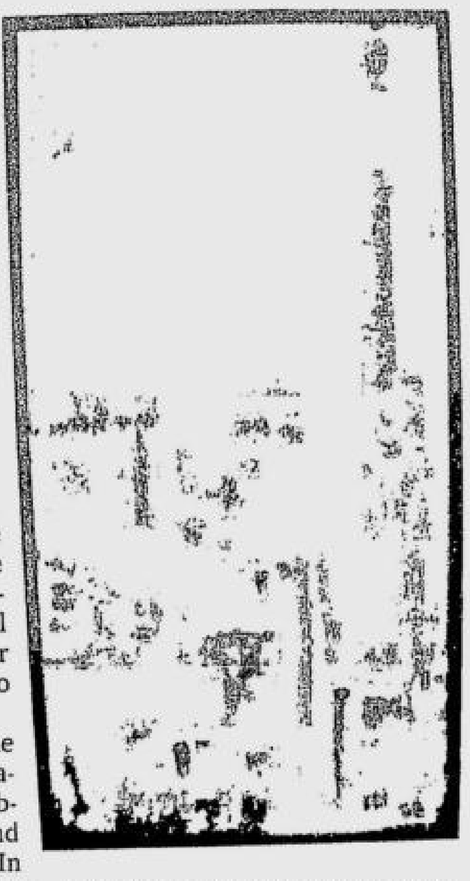
Presumably inspired by the chrome and concrete that dominate the Big City, he has created the "Chromescape," "Concretescape" and "Concrete Perception" series. Those titles notwithstanding, we see less of chrome but more of rust, and less of concrete but more of paint.

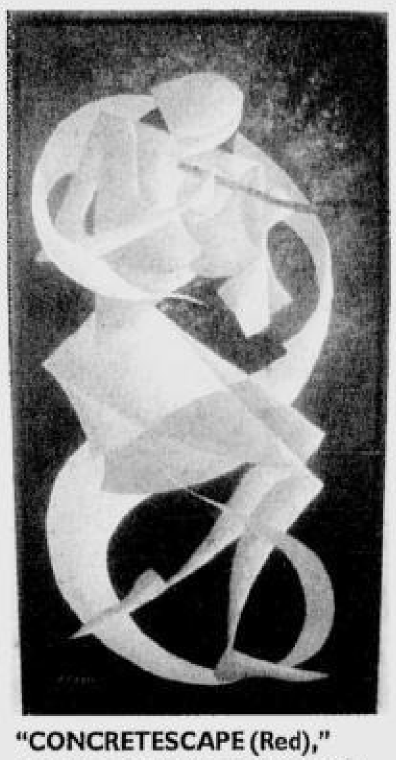
In fact, these pieces look like painted walls, specifically a mixture of pigment and cement, which is typical of the look of many a gestural painting. Yet this is less the impulsive style of De Kooning and more of the guided brushstroke of Art Informel.

The pieces lack the spontaneity of New York Abstract Expressionism but display the pattern-making, determined line and planned composition of German Lyrical Abstraction.

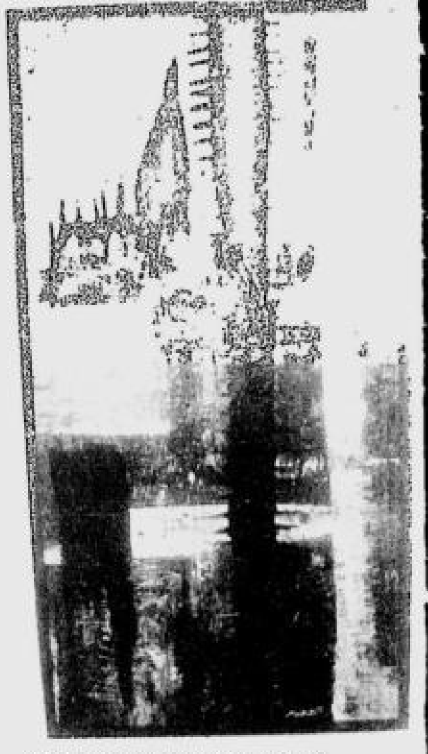
This exhibit demonstrates two artists whose modes of expression may at first look diametrically opposed, Maia lighthearted in her decorative art and Bautista somewhat heavy with vision that approaches Social Realism—but try putting their pieces closely side by side and see the visual effect.

His space would appear to be an extension of the color plane of the background where her form is set, and they'd assume a visual unity. Then you'd realize they really belong to each other.





"CONCRETESCAPE (Red)," by Aaron Bautista, and (above) "Flutist," by Maia



"CONCRETE Perception," by Bautista

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ella Rojas' tender . . .

From page C1

was in May-August this

"Bench and Large Trees, elle" soothes as she cap- the natural dappling of ht on patches of ground liage, making one pine for litude the piece exudes. ench seems an ideal seat miniscences or rumina-

nny Town, Provence" one feel like taking a soli- walk down the quaint ry alley lined by old stone s and occasional bursts of ns.

id the many landscapes, a tive work stands out not because it's life-size gh cropped at the first A man carries a woman heir lips are poised to meet .e Baiser" (The Kiss). e both au naturel. The says that though some it as erotica, what she is parlay is "tenderness and

says what she wants to y are "the simple and the positive," from serene or lighthearted scenery to nude figures that demonstrate intimacy rather than lasciviousness.

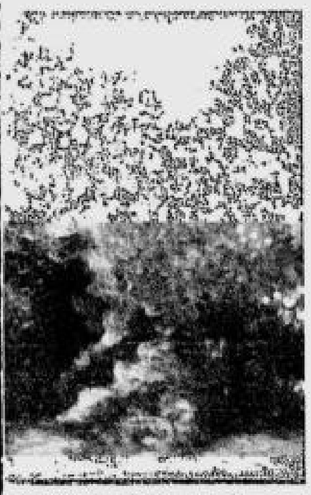
It is truly simple. It is the thread of communion that binds the artist with her creations—her own inner confirmations, being ensconced in nature's arms, and the pure union of lovers.

Some 10 years ago, Rojas said she would swim to get her creative juices flowing; the pool was her think tank.

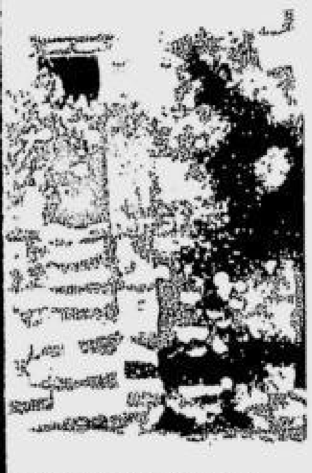
Only this time, she cocoons herself in verdant, preferably silent spaces.

In a sense, each time she returns to French greenery, it is also her return to nature, not to be swallowed but to be enveloped in its embrace of renewal. It is as if her desire to create were bolstered, because for her, it is "the power of nature" to which admirers of her pieces are beholden.

Comments are welcome at majorday@gmail.com



N Made Rock Formation, elle"



ORSTEPS, Red Flowers, resor"

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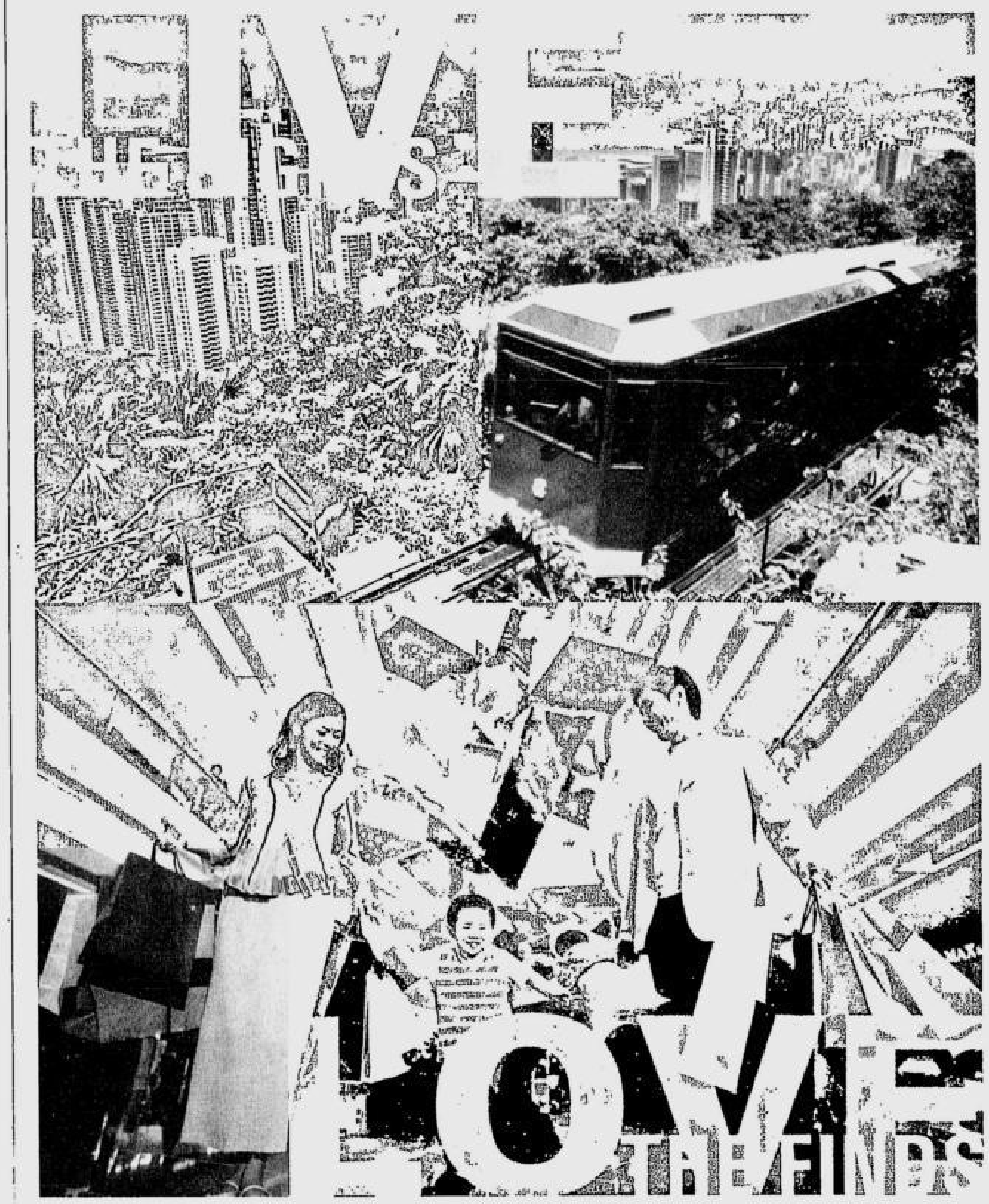

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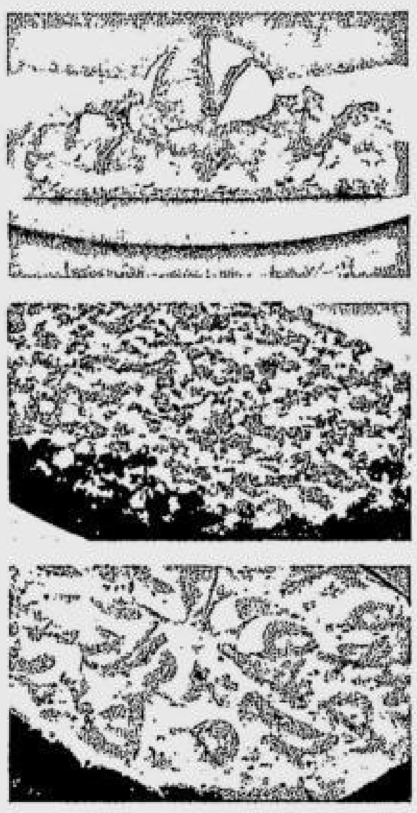
Discover with Greenwich's Pizza Pinoy

Pinoys simply just love to eat. It's amazing how we can readily satisfy our craving however farfetched it may be. Sometimes we can be so crazy that we take that long drive just to have a tasty bite or carefully plan our weekend activities just to try the specialty of some new restaurant. On occasions when we are left at home, we do not hesitate at the challenge of making innovations of our favorite dishes.

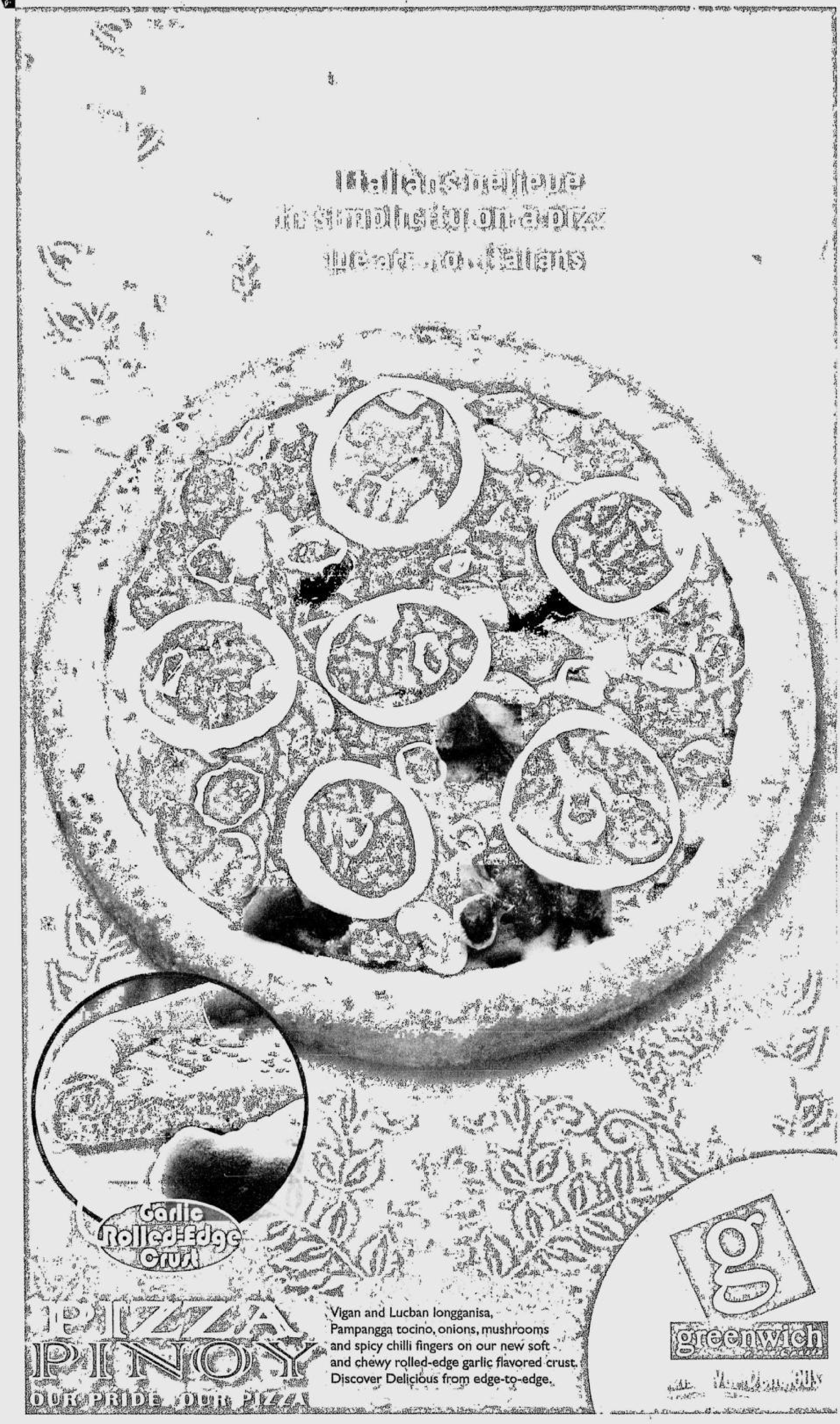
Truly aware of the vibrant Filipino palate, Greenwich recently captured that essence with the new Pizza Pinoy, a delectable feast that combines all-time-favorite Filipino meals of Vigan and Lucban Longganisa, Pampanga Tocino, chili fingers, mozzarella cheese, mushrooms, and onions, topped on Greenwich's new 9-inch garlic-flavored rolled edge crust.

Known for its non-stop pizza innovation fused with a unique Pinoy twist, Greenwich is committed to offer the best-tasting pizza that suits the discriminating palate. Greenwich is confident that the new Pizza Pinoy will become an instant hit, especially for those who go for the distinct Filipino taste. Aside from offering the best to its diners, Greenwich certainly knows how to please its loyal customers.



"Greenwich is committed to providing delicious pizza and pasta products that suit the tastes and preferences of the young working adults. The Greenwich heritage of coming up with new, creative and innovative pizza has always been our driving force---starting from the Super Sisig Pizza, Red Egg Royale Pizza, Mango Fiesta ala Mode, down to its newest product, Pizza Pinoy," said Lulu De Castro, Greenwich Marketing Manager.

Pizza Pinoy certainly gives another new reason to rush to any of Greenwich's 245 stores. For delivery orders in Metro Manila, you can also call Greenwich Delivery at 5-55-55.



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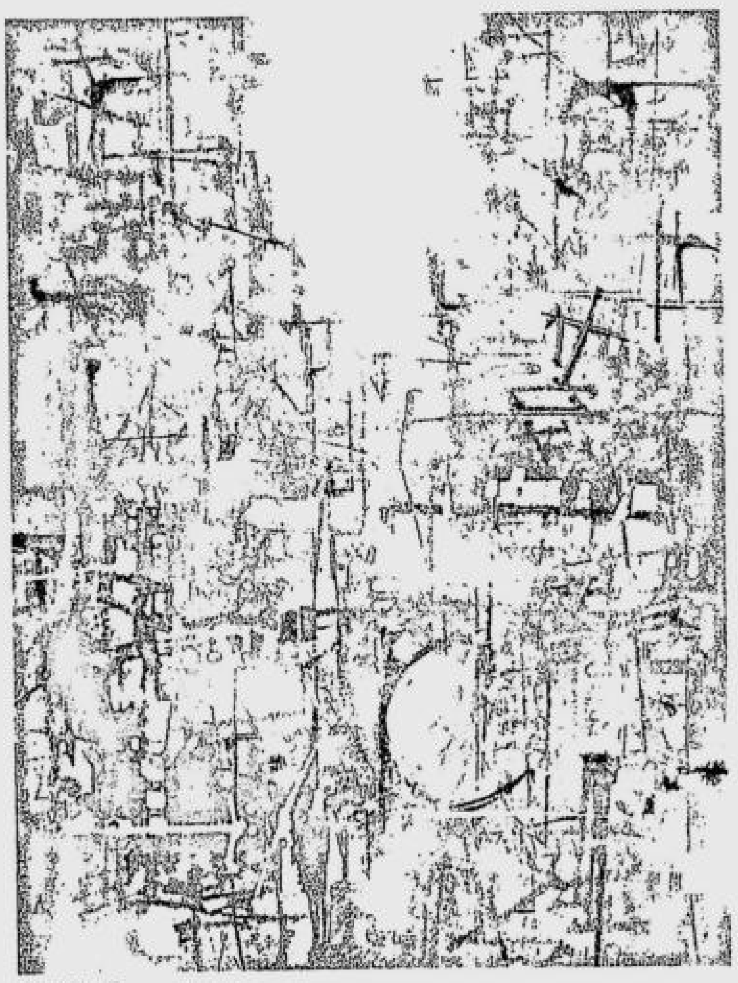
Edgar Doctor in media mix



CITY in Green

A new show synthesizes the artist's strengths and virtues

By Lito B. Zulueta

"MIXED BAG" SHOWCASES Edgar Doctor's varied and virtuosic handling of different mediums—watercolor (but of course!), acrylic and mixed media.

The new exhibit suspiciously tends to become a retrospective, but it is not that simply because the thought is much too daunting for curators and collectors.

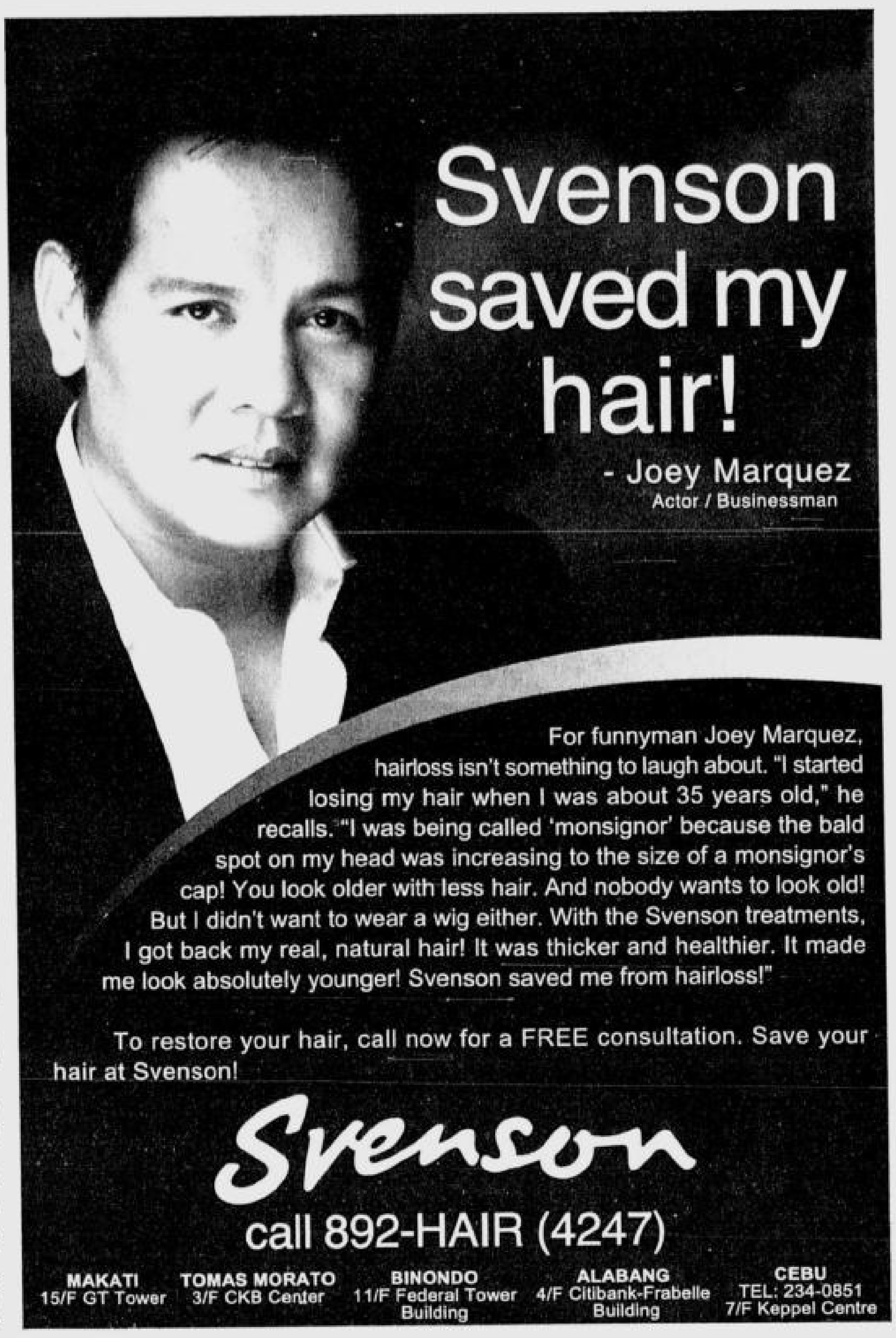
Like most great artists, Doctor is ambidextrous with mediums and materials: he may have gotten continuing acclaim in aquarelle, but he's equally skilled in acrylic, as well as in wood and metal sculptures.

And, as his mastery of watercolor should indicate, he's adroit at both representational art and abstracts. He has the best of both worlds.

Make that many worlds. As "Mixed Bag" shows, not only does Doctor handle well different mediums and conventions, he also excels in genre paintings.

The new exhibit, of course, is biased toward

EDGAR/ D2



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- Joey Marquez
Actor / Businessman

For funnyman Joey Marquez, hairloss isn't something to laugh about. "I started losing my hair when I was about 35 years old," he recalls. "I was being called 'monsignor' because the bald spot on my head was increasing to the size of a monsignor's cap! You look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old! But I didn't want to wear a wig either. With the Svenson treatments, I got back my real, natural hair! It was thicker and healthier. It made me look absolutely younger! Svenson saved me from hairloss!"

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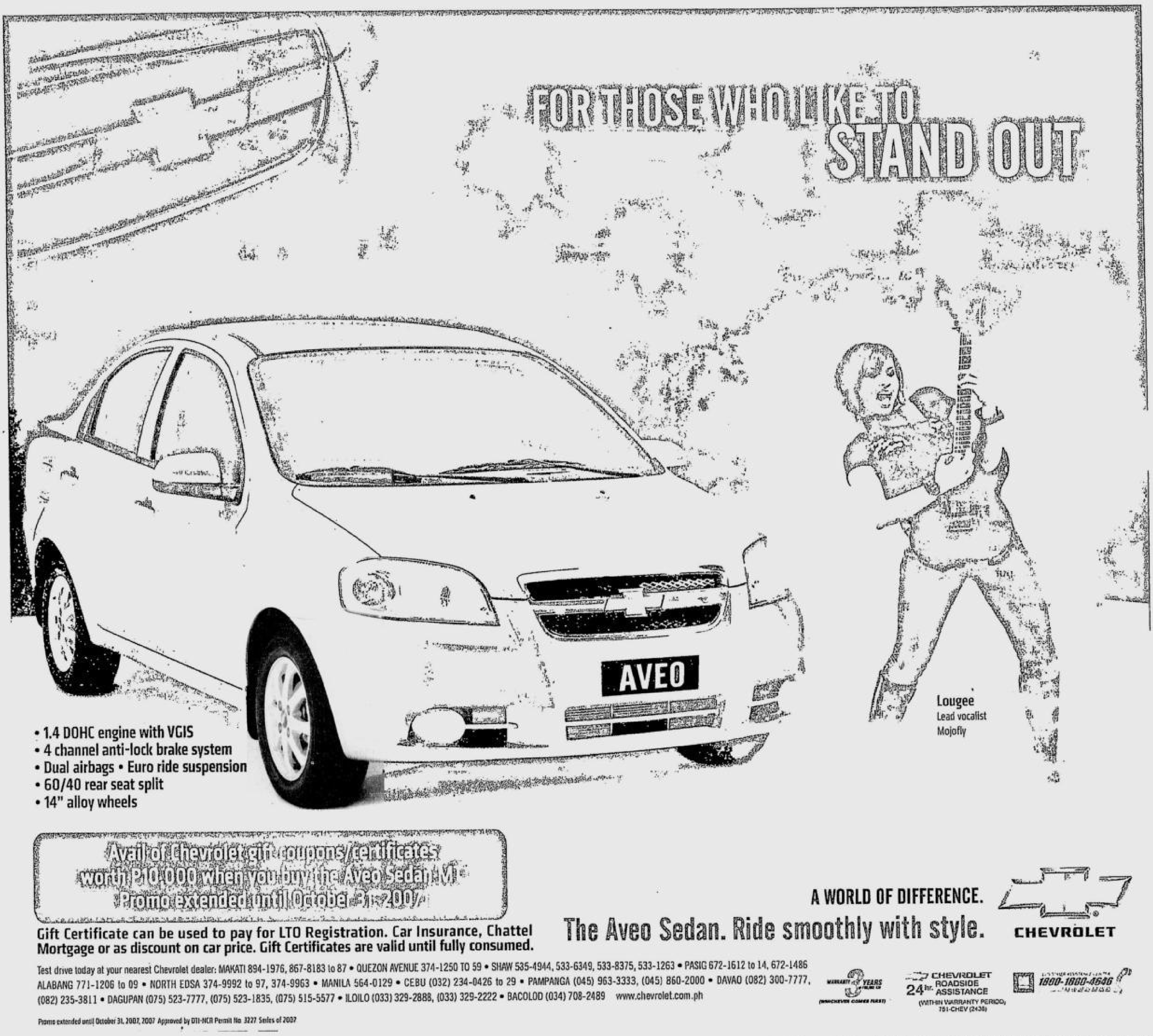

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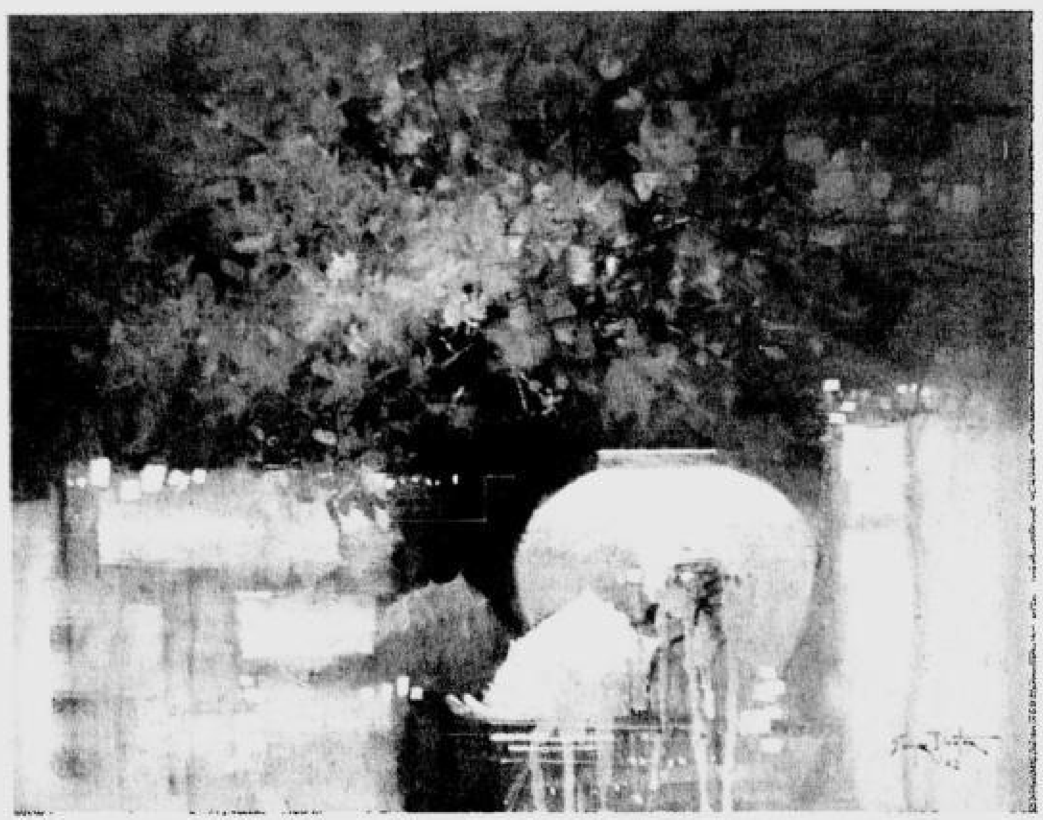
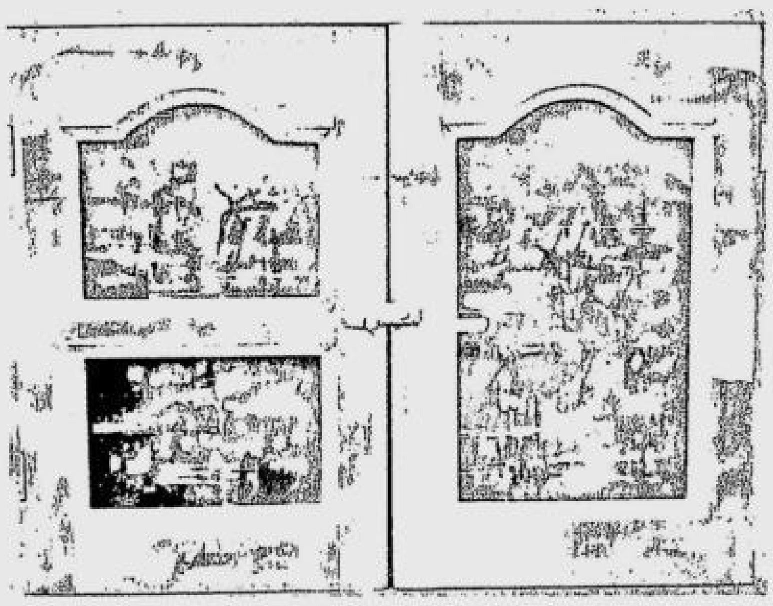
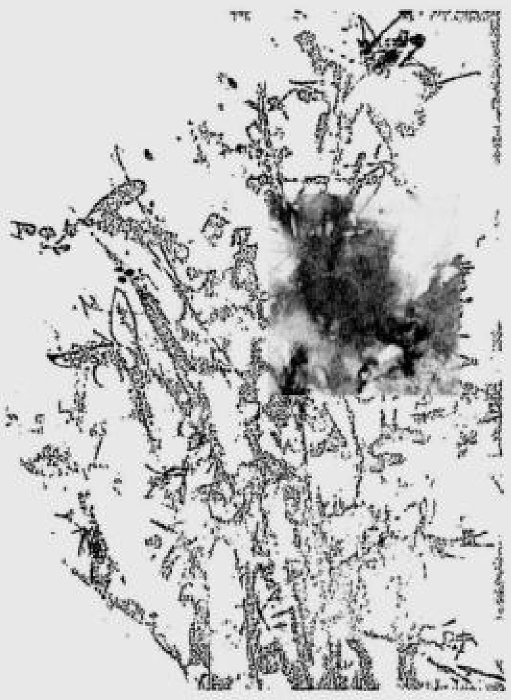


STILL Life in Red





"GREEN World from My Window" (above); "Red Flowers in the Garden" I (right)

Edgar Doctor . . .

From page D1

landscapes, marinescapes and still lifes, which are easy on the eye of both collectors and neophytes. But again and again, the artist introduces a certain twist, a certain detail that makes each piece different from the rest.

The watercolor avianscapes, for example, achieve a gossamer effect almost like a Chinese panel-painting. Meanwhile, the still lifes of fruits are done in the modern idiom, with the fruits not so much clumped together, but strategically spread on the canvas, like geometric points, the seemingly haphazard deployment calling attention to itself by shadings and splashes, a commentary on the artistic process that makes of the still life not so still, not so fixed.

The florals, another favorite of collectors, display to fine effect the drip or splash effect of aquarelle, which literally makes the flowers bloom and explode into pinpricks of light, a sly wink on the impressionist's trick.

Framings and musings

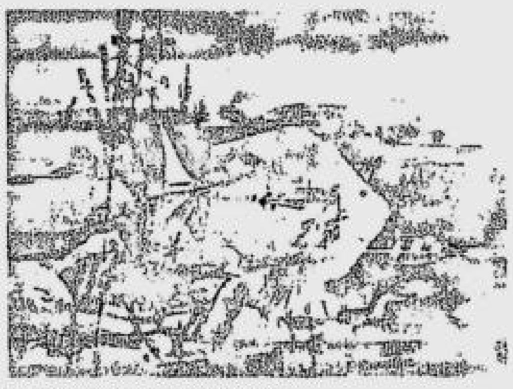
But perhaps the newest twist in the show is Doctor's use of frames to provide a vantage point for the artist's musings. In the mixed-media "Green World from My Window," an actual frame provides the edges of the artist's panorama, delimiting while also paradoxically expanding the artistic eye.

The same framing device is used in "Old City from My Window" (another mixed media), in which one of Doctor's favorite genres, the urbanscape, gets a clinical framework or skeleton, as it were, to delimit or constrain the urban sprawl and chaos. The result is uncanny: the abstracted bedlam may have been restrained, but the feeling it gives off is one of omen and foreboding, like a madman strapped for an electrocution.

All of this, of course, is tendentious if not agonized interpretation that may not exactly dovetail with the unflappability and serenity one associates with the art of Edgar Doctor.

But as "Mixed Bag" shows, Doctor the artist could also be Doctor the clinician, the experimenter, and the mood artist. Perhaps we have pigeonholed him too early, so that Edgar Doctor shows he has still tricks up his sleeve to surprise and shock us.

Edgar Doctor's "Mixed Bag" opens on Oct. 30 at the R1 Corridor of Power Plant Mall, Rockwell. The exhibit is mounted by Yellow Door Gallery. Call 09209624347 or e-mail info@yellowdoorgallery.net.



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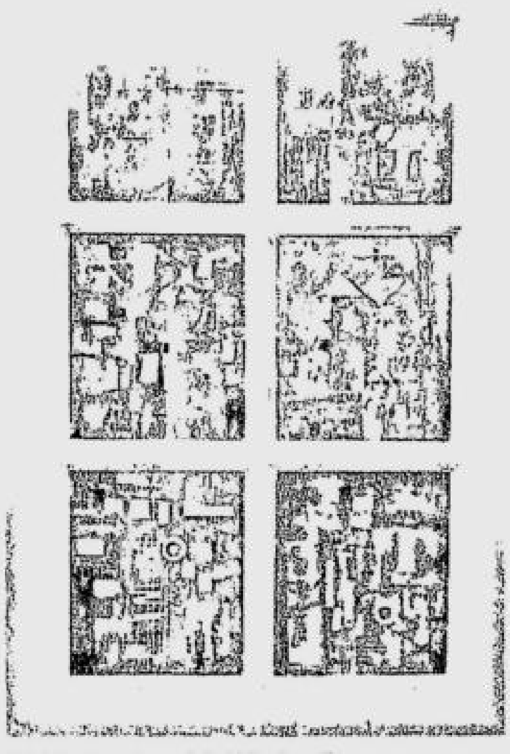

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Our painted moment

By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

TO SEE THE WORKS OF LUNA, Hidalgo, Amorsolo, Fabian de la Rosa, Edades, Francisco, Manansala, Tabuena, Legaspi, Kiukok, or Joya in one exhibit is to see.how the masters of Philippine visual arts have imagined the nation in the 20th century—a time of wars and devastation, and a time ironically of burgeoning aesthetics and philosophy. Our experience of modernity is not without contradiction since it is an exciting time of limitless possibilities of the visual world but fraught as well by poverty and squalor.

Poet Charles Baudelaire declares the transitory and contingent character of modernity that comprises half of art for which the other half is the immutable. In these works of the masters the imagined nation or to wit, imagi/nation, is precisely the fleeting image of who and what we are along with our decadence or limitation and the yearning for eternity.

For its second anniversary, Choice Expression Gallery, with Alay sa Bansa Center for Formation Research and Development mounts the exhibit "Maestro" which, aside from the works of the artists above, also features works of Abueva, Elizalde Navarro, Imao, Cabrera, Magsaysay-Ho, Saguil, Saprid, Alcuaz, Castrillo and Orlina.

"Maestro" is a fundraising activity for the training and formation of public-school principals all over the country.

In bringing teachers and artists together, the exhibit becomes a learning opportunity for all. Artworks are pedagogical tools.

Amorsolo's rural scenes, for example, assume a symbolic value with idealized peasant folks, stalwart youths and ever smiling maidens. With the incipient influence of impressionism according to critic Alice Guillermo, Amorsolo's warm tones capture the vibrant tropical sunlight which not only describes our country but somehow portrays our promising enlightenment.

Amorsolo's "The Burning of Idols" becomes the iridescent moment in our history. When surrendering our pagan past, we enter a world complicated by new forms of social relations and modes of production. Perhaps for Amorsolo, time teaches us that history is a series of dialectic movement and the burning of idols is just one of that series toward the growth of our collective consciousness.

He knew perhaps that his art would not go unchallenged and, indeed, in the early decades of modernism, Guillermo claims that artists would value expressiveness, make room for the terrible and ugly, and expand the subject matter of art into contemporary concerns.

Romeo Tabuena, José Joya and Federico Alcuaz are among the few who would carry the mantle of this modernist challenge. According to critic Rodolfo Paras-Perez, Tabuena's images are the logical extensions and amplifications of the motifs taken up by the so-called Neo-Realist group in the Philippines.

With his Philippine scenes, Tabuena depicts sights of remembered and dreamed things, where carabaos, for instance, appear weightless, lost in the midst of indeterminate atmosphere or driven by nameless men with undefined visages. Tabuena reconstitutes reality into a plastic structure with an idiom that is undoubtedly Cubistic.

Hence in his "Simbahan" and "Vendor" with geometric faces, chiseled bodies and fragmented images, our history explodes its linearity to multi-angular views and becomes a poetic revolution in the process.

Joya tried to reach out to provincial universities and schools and introduce art appreciation to Sapang Palay and Tondo. Joya would not only influence young painters but radicalize his art by introducing gestural painting in a number of large canvases in the 1960s but later would shift to compositions of rounded overlapping shapes in harmonious hues.

Guillermo notes how abstract landscapes allusive of forms of the natural environment would be a recurring theme in Joya, using textures such as sand-and-rice paper collages with Asian influences like *mandala* concepts and Chinese calligraphy.

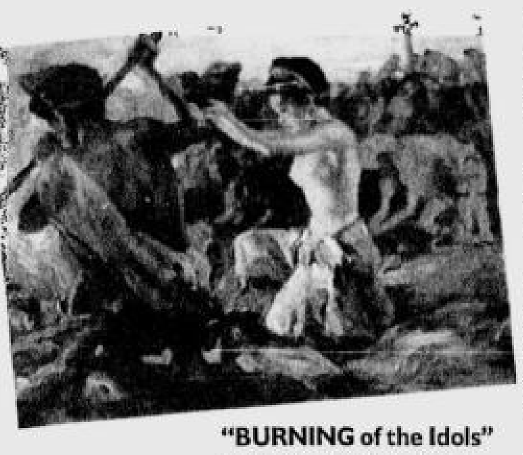
Alcuaz would later combine the gestural verve of Joya with surrealism and although he would be known as a sort of epic troubadour of the urban landscape, he depicts the splendor of a city.

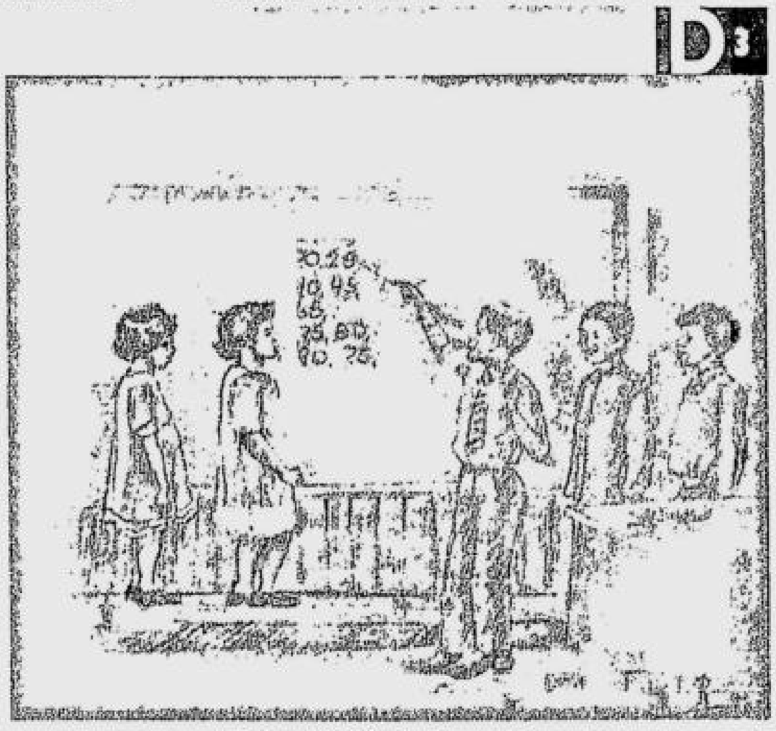
His works eschew the intimacy often characteristic of Amorsolo's since details are not singled out but suggested with a sense of totality or gestalt.

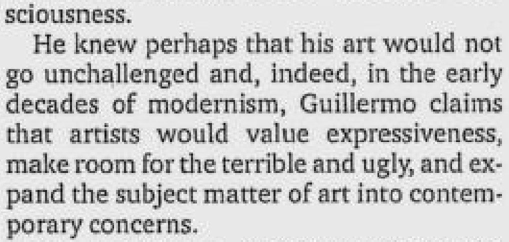
Joya once said that in creating an artwork, the artist is concretizing his need for communication, for "artist has an irresistible urge to reach that level of spiritual satisfaction and to project what he is and what he thinks through his work."

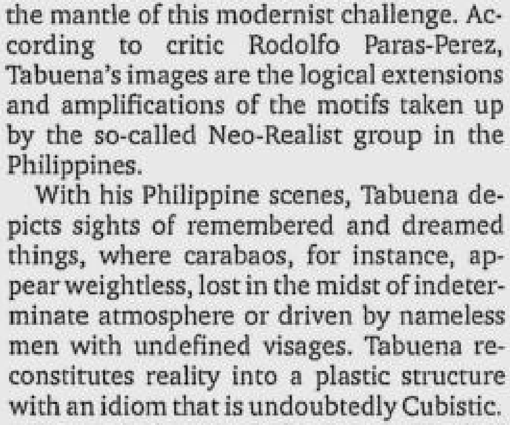
Whether this spiritual satisfaction started with the caves of Lascaux or even in our own Mannungul jars, artists are definitely the teachers or "maestros" pointing to that elusive moment of a country waiting to be born and people in search of heroes and models for these trying times.

A silent auction for seven prime pieces will be on Oct. 30 in Choice Expression Gallery, Doña Consolacion Bldg., 122 Jupiter St., Bel-Air; and Board Room at 7/F Pioneer House, 108 Paseo de Roxas and Legaspi St. The exhibit of the entire collection will open Nov. 7 at the North Court Lobby of Power Plant Mall, Rockwell, Makati. Call 8990718 and 0928-5065719.


"BURNING of the Idols"
by Fernando Amorsolo


"MAESTRO,"
by Fabian de la Rosa


STILL life by José Joya


"GOBLET and Lemons," by Federico Alcuaz

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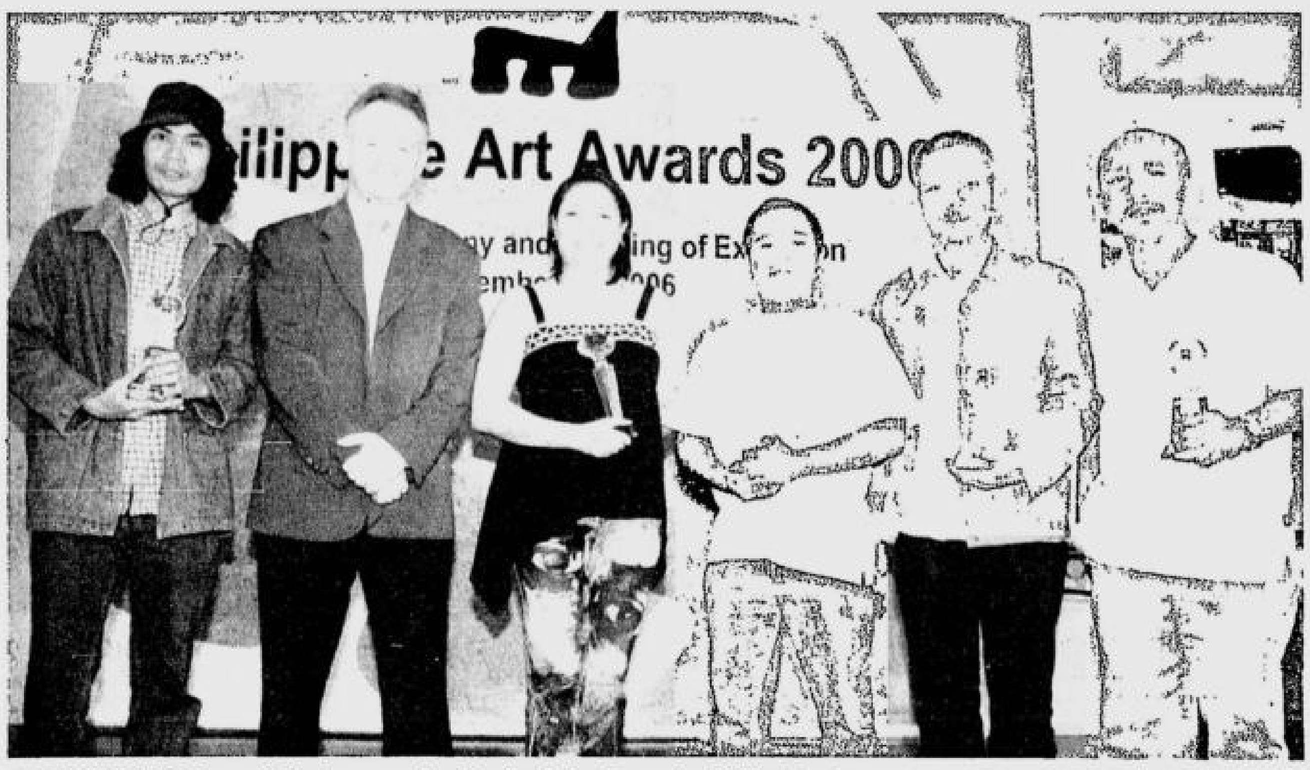


2006 WINNERS. Jurors' Choice awardee Danilo de los Reyes Jr.; Philip Morris managing director Chris J. Nelson; grand-prize winner Maria Victoria Abaño; Jurors' Choice awardees Demetrio de la Cruz, Rodelio "Toti" Cerda and Cris Villanueva Jr.

Art
Awards
Art

RECIPIENTS of the Philip Morris coffee-table book: corporate affairs director Bayen Elero; National Artist Ben Cabrera; Metropolitan Museum trustee Rita Ledesma; Philippine Star president Kevin Belmonte; Philip Morris managing director Chris Nelson; artist Ramon Diaz of Galleria Duemila; National Artist Abdulmari Imao; and art historian/critic Rodolfo Paras-Perez.

Regional art contest winners bared soon

PHILIP MORRIS PHILIPPINES manufacturing Inc. (PMPMI), sponsor of the Philippine Art Awards (PAA), is set to announce the first batch of winners from the recently concluded regional selections for Metro Manila and Luzon at the Museum of the Filipino People.

Starting this year, the PAA has been made much wider and grander as a two-tiered, bi-annual event involving four Philippine regional competitions—Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Ten equal winners are selected from each of the regional-level competition.

All of the 40 regional winners will then move on to compete in the national-level competition in February 2008.

Each of the regional winners will receive P40,000 and a trophy.

For the national finals, the grand-prize winner will get P350,000 and five Juror's Choice will each receive P120,000.

The national winners for 2008 will be treated to an all-expense paid trip to Hanoi, Vietnam, one of Asean's fast-growing art markets.

"The consistent response of artists to our call of entries over the years, and their confidence on the credible judging process and museum standards effected in handling of their entries, have contributed to the decision of Philip Morris to continue improving the Awards," says Philip Morris public affairs and communications manager Dave Gomez.

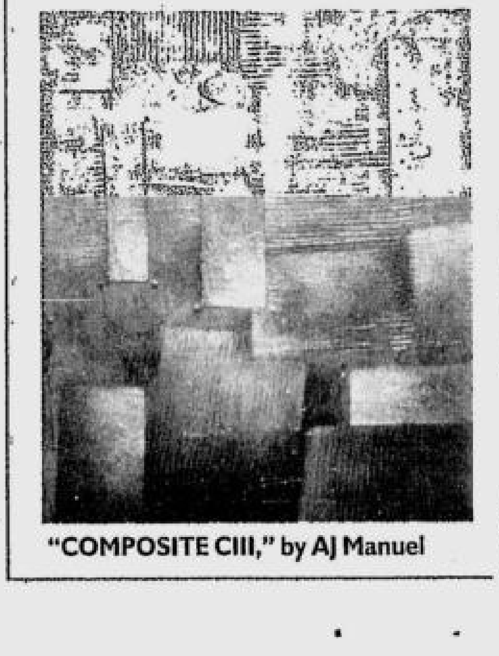
All 20 winning works from Metro Manila and Luzon, which have been selected from a collective pool of almost 400 entries by this year's two panels of judges, will be featured in a month-long exhibition at the National Museum.

Managing director Chris Nelson says: "Philip Morris has supported the arts worldwide for the past 50 years. Rest assured that in the Philippines, our company will continue to support the arts since we acknowledge that this is a unique way for a society to define, express and understand its experience. It is our commitment to introduce innovations to encourage Filipino visual artists to raise the standard and quality of their art."

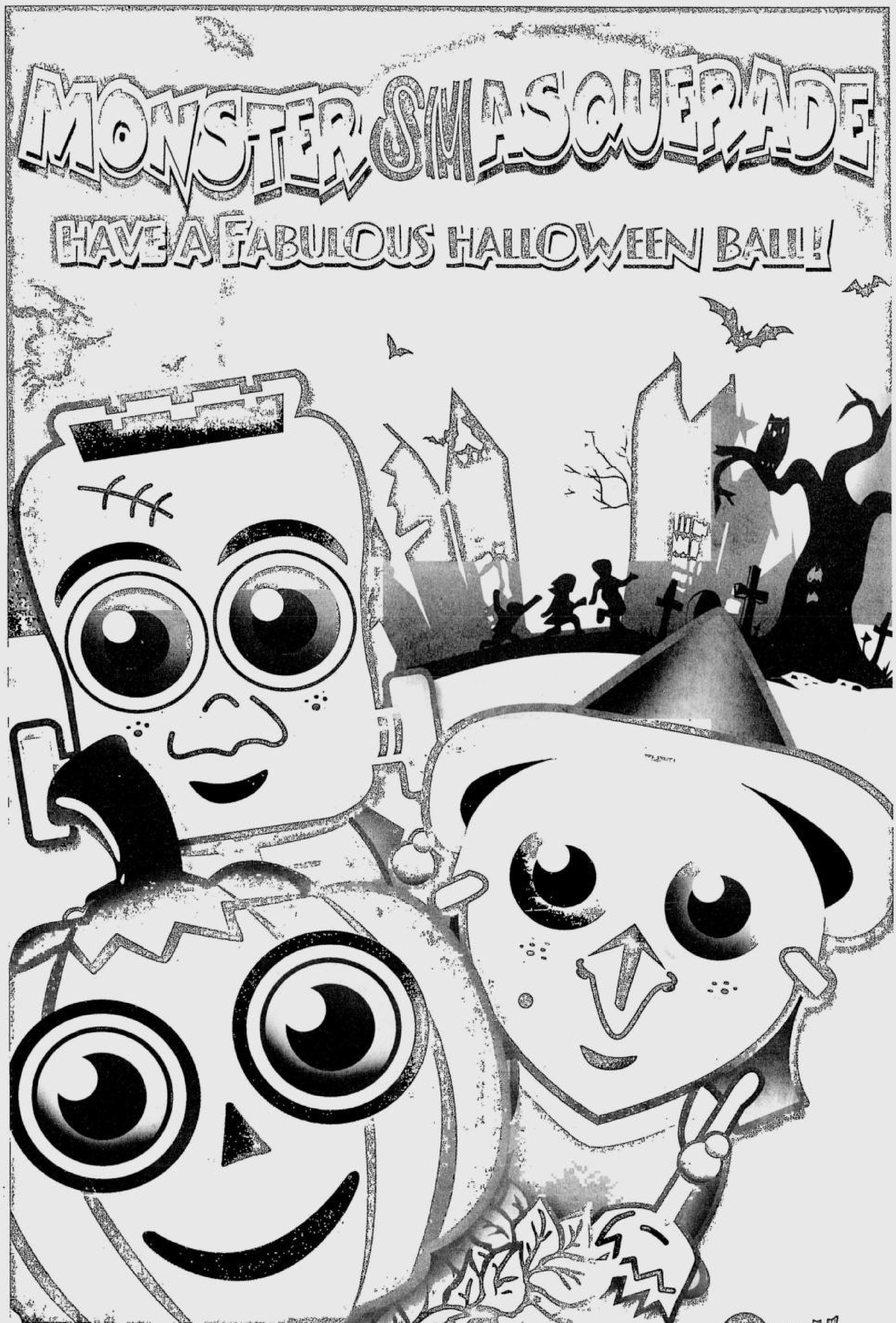
Now celebrating its 12th season, the Philippine Art Awards has maintained its stature as one of the Philippines preeminent contemporary two-dimensional art competition and exhibition.

Manuel at MOA

ADRIAN JAY MANUEL MOUNTS his fourth one-man show, "Composites," featuring textured abstractions that incorporate the use of different media creating an innovative artform, in which colors and sizes can form composite groups. The exhibit runs until Oct. 31 in Artes Orientes Gallery, SM Mall of Asia. Call 0917-5230877 or 5560590.



"COMPOSITE CIII," by AJ Manuel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Musical feast for Sta. Isabel anniversary

Pianist Cristine Coyiuto handles well a challenging, if mind-boggling, program

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

SANTA ISABEL COLlege observed its 375th year anniversary with a special recital of one of its outstanding graduates, pianist Cristine Coyiuto, who earned her degrees in Piano and Music Education with singular honor as one of the school's very first magna cum laudes.

The school started as a school for orphans, most of them daughters of Spanish soldiers. Later it opened its doors to Filipino girls as well. It got its name by a royal decree of Queen Isabela II.

In 1864, the Daughters of Charity took over the school, which was then in Intramuros. It later moved to its present Taft Avenue address courtesy of Msgr. Vicente Reyes (then head of the San Miguel Parish), who offered some rooms in the convent so that the apostolate of educating young girls would continue. Its first Filipino superior was Sr. Candida Ocampo, DC.

Its music program (Master of Music, Master of Music in Arts Education, and Bachelor of Music) was later opened to boys.

In her latest recital at the CCP Little Theater, Coyiuto once again incorporated the rarely played Lyric Pieces by Edward Grieg, whose 100th death anniversary is being observed this year.

On the whole, it was a challenging, if mind-boggling, program consisting of Handel's Chaconne in G Major, HWV 435; and Rachmaninoff's Six Moments Musicaux, Op. 16, and Sonata in G Minor, Op. 19, the latter closing the program with cellist Antoni Josef Inacay.

The Handel opener—based on an eloquent theme and followed by 21 variations, seven of them in minor key—easily defined the pianist as an eloquent interpreter of music in the Baroque period. She was able to bring out the piece's wide range of colors and the formidable dramatic progression. It was to her credit she was able to sustain her fluency with an uncanny sense of rhythm.

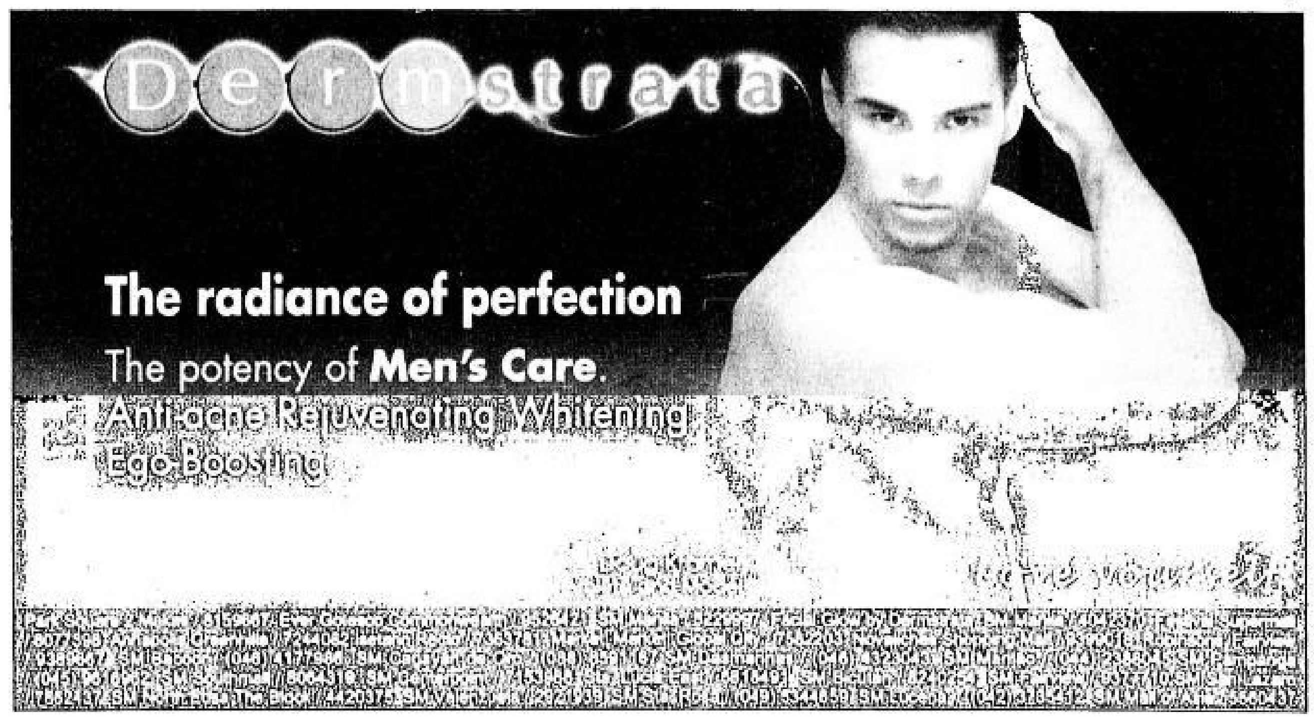
Grieg's Lyric Pieces Coyiuto delineated with musical insight, and here one was ushered into the composer's musical influences (Chopin, Schumann, Liszt and Mendelssohn) and his favorite people and events.

But in some sections of the 10 sets and opuses, Grieg tended to come out like a poor copy of Chopin and Schumann; he seems as if struggling to shed off the influences of Mendelssohn and Debussy.

The tough technical demands of Rachmaninoff's Six Moments Musicaux, Op. 16, were obvious in the six sections of the piece, and here Coyiuto showcased the rightful tones needed to project the opus.

If Coyiuto tended to be highly lyrical in the Grieg number, she faced a strenuous keyboard battle in the initial Rachmaninoff number with its demands for virtuosic supremacy. She made it unscathed but it was obvious the piece had demanded an in-

MUSICAL/ E3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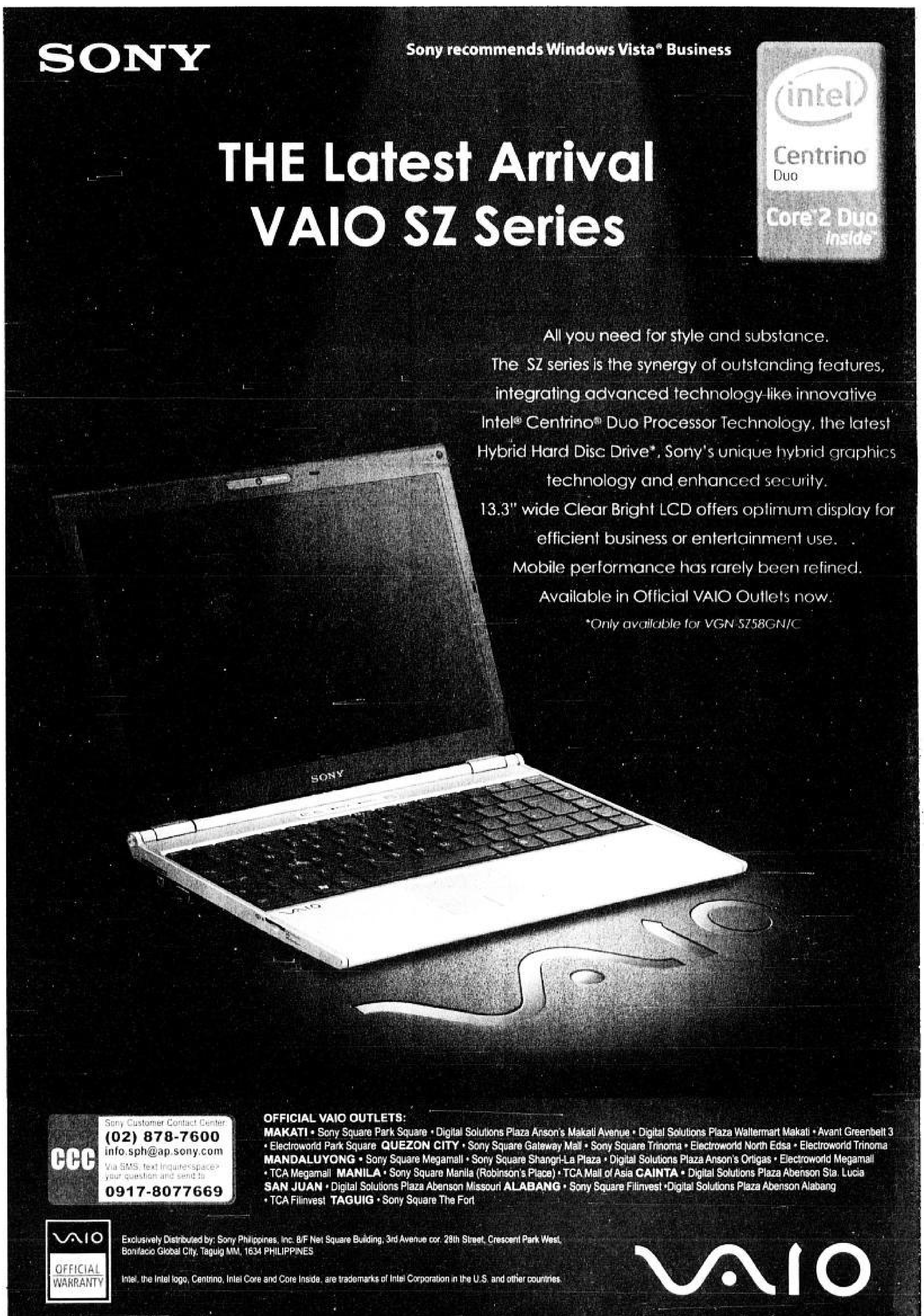
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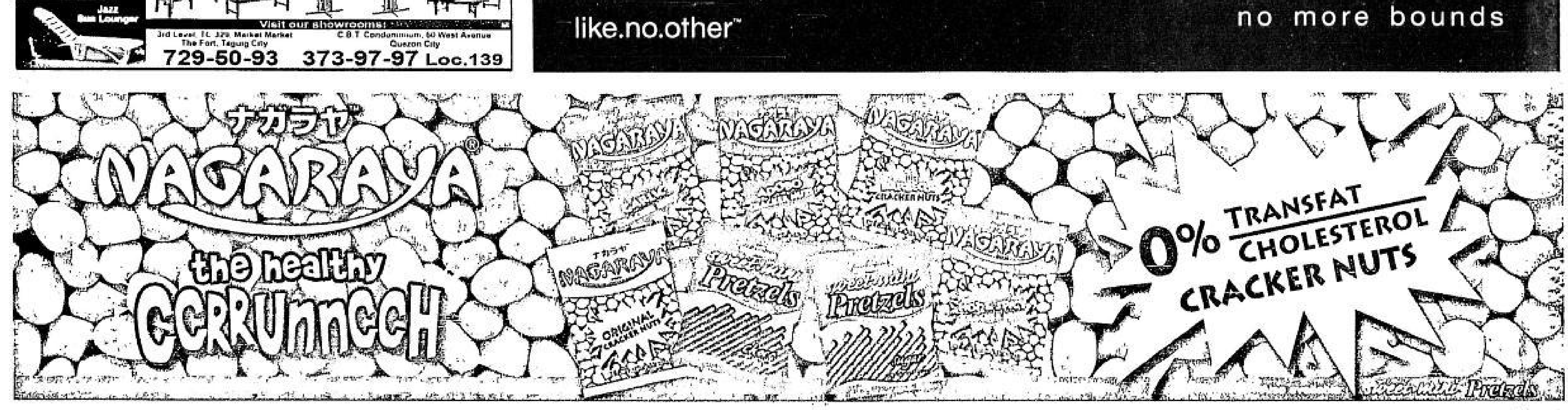
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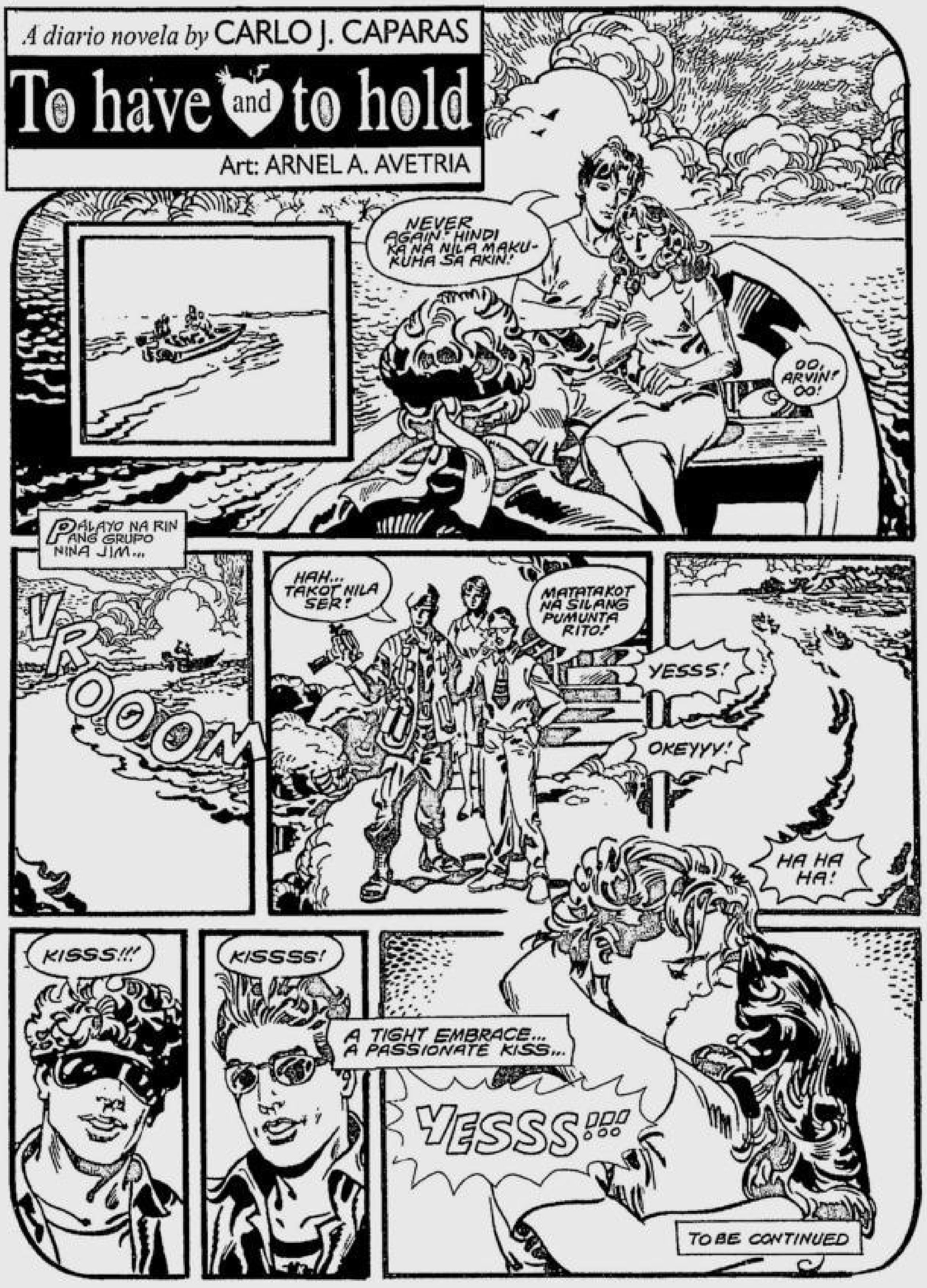
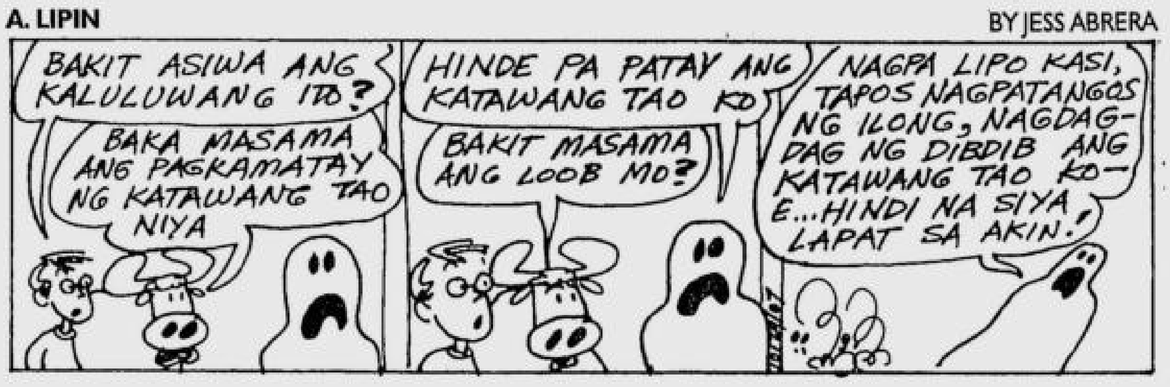
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


NEVER AGAIN! HINDI KA NA NILA MAKUKUHA SA AKIN!
OO, ARVIN! OO!
PALAYO NA RIN ANG GRUPO NINA JIM...
VROOOOM
HAH... TAKOT NILA SER!
MATATAKOT NA SILANG PUMUNTA RITO!
YESSS!
OKEYYY!
HA HA HA!
KISSS!!!
KISSSS!
A TIGHT EMBRACE... A PASSIONATE KISS...
YESSS!!!
TO BE CONTINUED

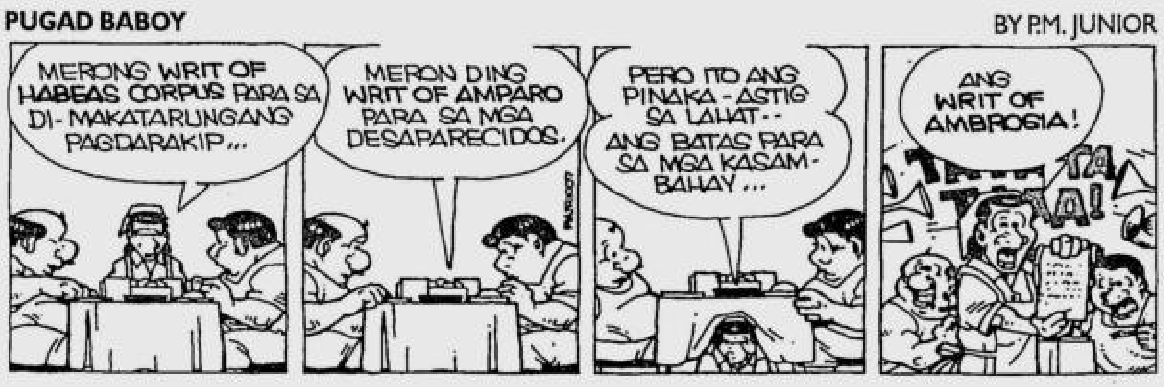
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKIT ASIWA ANG KALULUWANG ITO?
BAKA MASAMA ANG PAGKAMATAY NG KATAWANG TAO NIYA
HINDE PA PATAY ANG KATAWANG TAO KO
BAKIT MASAMA ANG LOOB MO?
NAGPA LIPO KASI, TAPOS NAGPATANGOS NG ILONG, NAGDAGDAG NG DIBDIB ANG KATAWANG TAO KO— E...HINDI NA SIYA LAPAT SA AKIN!

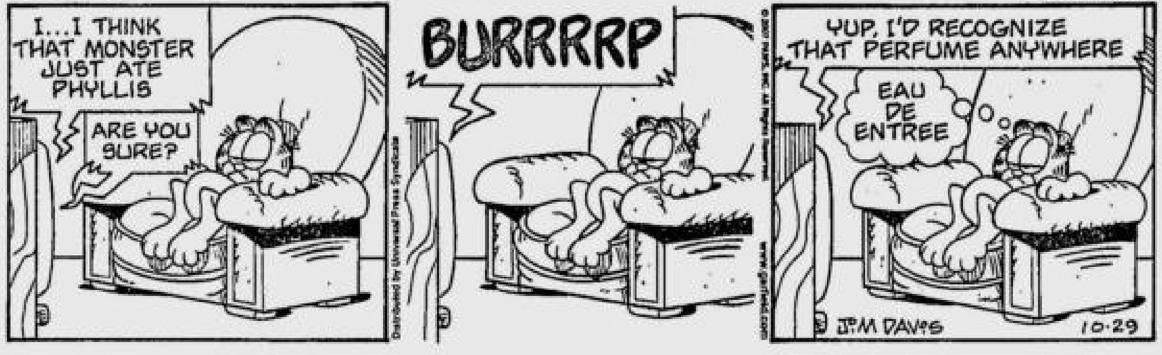
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MERONG WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS PARA SA DI-MAKATARUNGANG PAGDARAKIP...
MERON DING WRIT OF AMPARO PARA SA MGA DESAPARECIDOS.
PERO ITO ANG PINAKA-ASTIG SA LAHAT-- ANG BATAS PARA SA MGA KASAMBAHAY...
ANG WRIT OF AMBROSIA!
TA-DA!

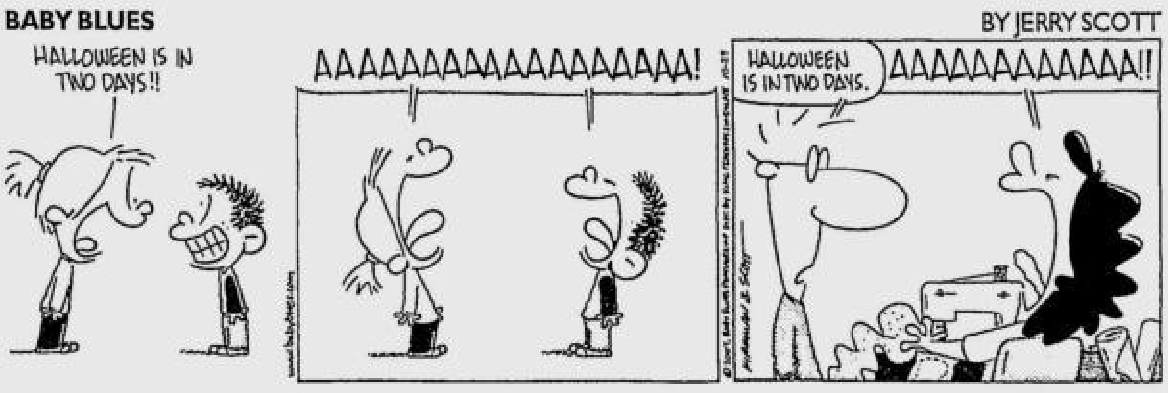
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I...I THINK THAT MONSTER JUST ATE PHYLLIS
ARE YOU SURE?
BURRRRP
YUP, I'D RECOGNIZE THAT PERFUME ANYWHERE
EAU DE ENTREE
JIM DAVIS
10-29

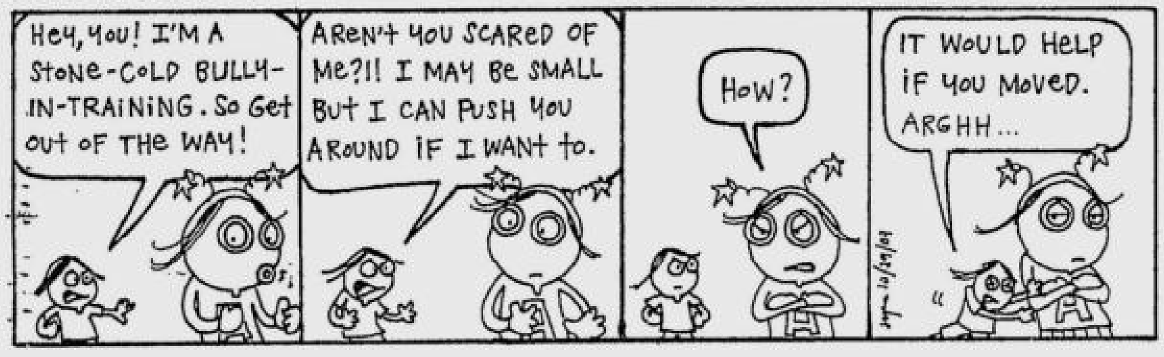
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HALLOWEEN IS IN TWO DAYS!!
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!
HALLOWEEN IS IN TWO DAYS.
AAAAAAAAAAAA!!

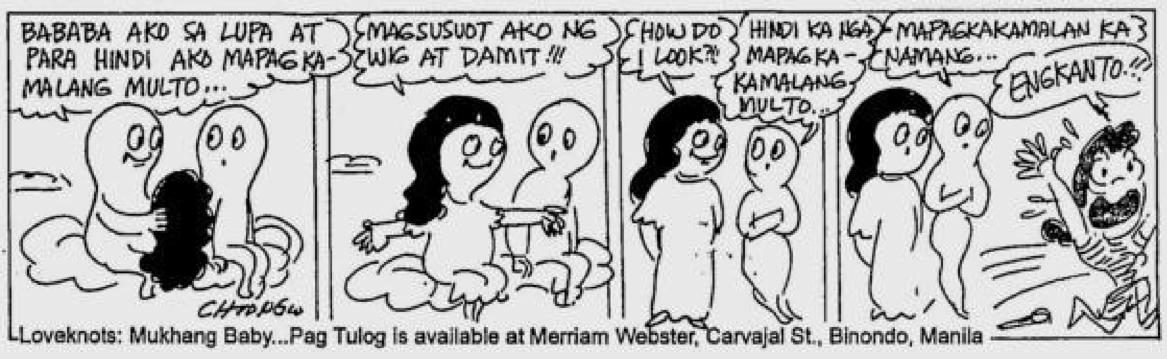
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, you! I'M A Stone-COLD BULLY-IN-TRAINING. So Get out of THE WAY!
AREN'T you SCARED OF Me?!! I MAY Be SMALL But I CAN PUSH you AROUND IF I WANT to.
How?
IT WOULD HeLP IF you MoveD. ARGHH...

LOVEKNOTS

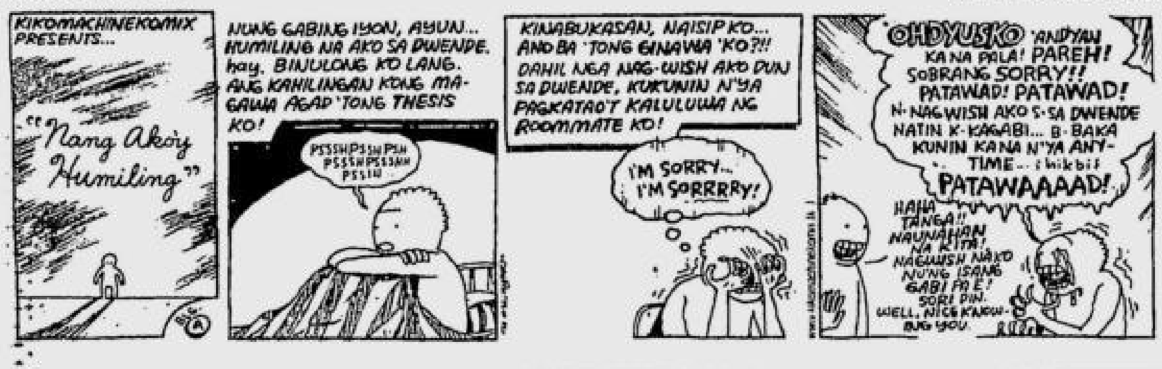
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BABABA AKO SA LUPA AT PARA HINDI AKO MAPAGKAMALANG MULTO...
MAGSUSUOT AKO NG WIG AT DAMIT!!!
HOW DO I LOOK?!
HINDI KA NGA MAPAGKAKAMALANG MULTO...
MAPAGKAKAMALAN KA NAMANG...
ENGKANTO!!!
CHIONGLO

Loveknots: Mukhang Baby...Pag Tulog is available at Merriam Webster, Carvajal St., Binondo, Manila

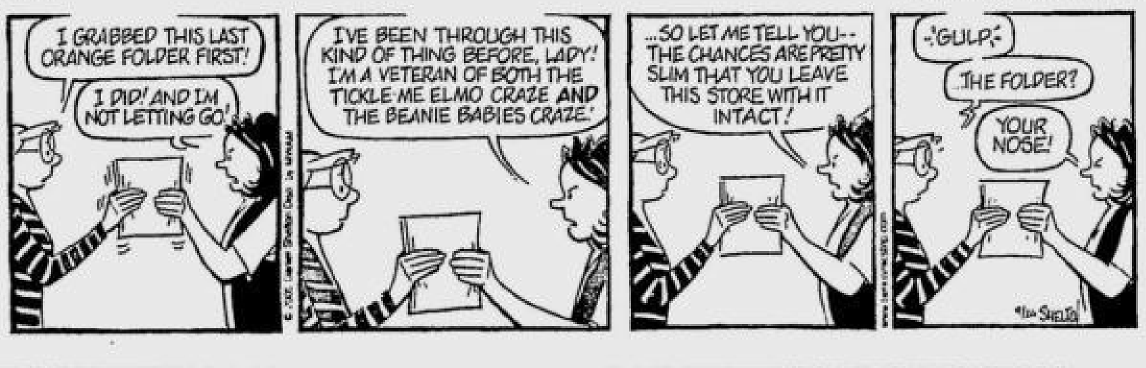
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KIKOMACHINEKOMIX PRESENTS...
"Nang Ako'y Humiling"
NUNG GABING IYON, AYUN... HUMILING NA AKO SA DWENDE. hay. BINULONG KO LANG. ANG KAHILINGAN KONG MAGAWA AGAD 'TONG THESIS KO!
PSSSHPSSHPSH PSSSHPSSSHH PSSIH
KINABUKASAN, NAISIP KO... ANO BA 'TONG GINAWA 'KO?!! DAHIL NGA NAG-WISH AKO DUN SA DWENDE, KUKUNIN N'YA PAGKATAO'T KALULUWA NG ROOMMATE KO!
I'M SORRY... I'M SORRRRY!
OHDYUSKO 'ANDYAN KA NA PALA! PAREH! SOBRANG SORRY!! PATAWAD! PATAWAD! N-NAG WISH AKO S-SA DWENDE NATIN K-KAGABI... B-BAKA KUNIN KA NA N'YA ANY-TIME... :hikbi! PATAWAAAAD!
HAHA TANGA!! NAUNAHAN NA KITA! NAGWISH NAKO NUNG ISANG GABI PA E! SORI DIN. WELL, NICE KNOWING YOU.

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I GRABBED THIS LAST ORANGE FOLDER FIRST!
I DID! AND I'M NOT LETTING GO!
I'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS KIND OF THING BEFORE, LADY! I'M A VETERAN OF BOTH THE TICKLE ME ELMO CRAZE AND THE BEANIE BABIES CRAZE!
...SO LET ME TELL YOU-- THE CHANCES ARE PRETTY SLIM THAT YOU LEAVE THIS STORE WITH IT INTACT!
GULP
THE FOLDER?
YOUR NOSE!

DAILY CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				■	15			■	16					
17				■	18			■	19					
20				21	■	22		23	■	■	24			
■	25				26				27	28		■	■	■
■	■	■	29			■	30					31	32	33
34	35	36	■	37		38								
39			40	■	■	41			■	■	42			
43				44	45				46	47	■	48		
49								■	50		51	■	■	■
■	■	■	52					53				54	55	■
56	57	58		■	■	59			■	60				61
62				63	64	■	65		66	■	67			
68						■	69			■	70			
71						■	72			■	73			

By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

10/29/07

ACROSS
1 Herring cousin
5 Gaping mouth
8 Jim Henson creation
14 Bamako's land
15 Paid player
16 Off the ship
17 Israeli weapons
18 90 degrees from vert.
19 Longs (for)
20 Salami choice
22 H.S. math
24 Dele a dele
25 1957 Braves pitcher
29 Angler's entangler
30 Sweet talker
34 Roundball org.
37 1989 A's pitcher
39 Jason's ship
41 Exist
42 "Tristia" poet
43 1993 Blue Jay DH
48 Double curve
49 Pod
50 Granola morsel
52 1980 Phillies third baseman
56 Spreadsheet filler
59 Dallas sch.
60 Unadorned
62 Hit the big time
65 Type of home loan: abbr.
67 Word on diet foods
68 Was in charge of
69 Pressure unit
70 Building wings
71 Backslid
72 Birth certificate info
73 Some whiskies

DOWN
1 Insufferably complacent
2 Witch __
3 Skirt shape
4 Prevent from inheriting
5 Velocity meas.
6 Bellowing
7 25, 37, 43 and 52A
8 Derby month
9 Employment
10 Stage after the initial stage
11 Nautical left
12 Sea eagle
13 Part of SAT
21 Between the sheets
23 Girls E-Mentoring Program
26 Actress Hagen
27 Little tyke
28 Hammer obliquely
31 Suffer from
32 Pupil maker
33 Postings at JFK
34 Catches forty winks
35 Highland hillside
36 Chills and fever
38 Ballroom dances
40 Spinsters
44 1101
45 Grown acorn
46 Stunned response
47 Cloverleaf part
51 Farm machine
53 Blaspheme
54 Seven times a week
55 Earl or viscount
56 Willie Wonka's creator
57 Vicinity
58 Ensnare
61 Capone undoer
63 Churchill's sign
64 Actor Byrnes
66 Cowboy Tom of oaters

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

J	A	K	E	■	F	R	A	U	D	■	A	S	P	S
I	R	A	N	C	O	N	T	R	A	■	S	T	E	T
M	O	R	G	A	N	A	T	I	C	■	L	E	N	I
I	N	L	A	N	D	■	■	■	H	E	A	T	E	R
■	■	■	G	O	U	P	A	G	A	I	N	S	T	■
S	H	E	E	N	■	I	R	R	■	S	T	O	R	K
H	E	X	■	I	T	E	M	I	Z	E	■	N	A	N
A	R	C	■	C	A	R	■	N	U	N	■	H	B	O
W	B	A	■	A	B	S	I	N	T	H	■	A	L	B
N	A	V	E	L	■	O	N	E	■	O	A	T	E	S
■	C	A	L	L	I	N	G	D	O	W	N	■	■	■
B	E	T	S	Y	S	■	■	■	D	E	V	I	C	E
R	O	O	T	■	O	R	A	T	O	R	I	C	A	L
E	U	R	O	■	L	O	V	E	R	S	L	A	N	E
A	S	S	N	■	A	D	I	T	S	■	S	L	A	V

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10/28/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly original; you bring a new approach to activities that involve you. If you're enthused about something, you have no trouble persuading others to climb on your bandwagon. (In this way, you can become quite influential.) You're logical and intelligent. You work well with others. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Richard Dreyfus, actor; Winona Ryder, actress; Dan Castellaneta, voice actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Whatever you do with close friends and partners today (either sharing time or talking) will be productive in a practical way. You want to see how much you can get done.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Mundane, routine work will not deter you today. You're ready to roll up your sleeves and get something done. Working with pet-related activities will be rewarding.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Some of you are dealing with the responsibilities of children. It's a good day to give young people advice. Romantic discussions are serious as well.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with or about parents will be productive today. Someone wants to feel more secure about his or her future, and you might be the one to help make this happen.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to do some serious thinking or have serious discussions with siblings and relatives. You might want to explore where future avenues will lead.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If shopping today, you'll buy something practical that will last for a long time. You'll avoid anything that's wasteful or frivolous. And you'll love a bargain!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): What interests you most today are practical events and situations. You don't feel frivolous. You want to work hard to accomplish something because you want some solid results.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Most Scorpios have excellent concentration and focus. But today, your ability to research something is quite amazing. You rock!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Someone older or wiser might have good advice for you today. It certainly doesn't hurt to listen. Sometimes good tips come from surprising sources.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's almost as if you have a second chance to give serious thought to your life direction. Discussions with bosses, parents or anyone who is older or more experienced than you will be helpful.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's easy to make future plans today—especially related to travel, dealing with foreign countries, publishing, the media and anything having to do with medicine and the law. You're taking a long-range view of your life.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent day to discuss the wealth and resources of others, or perhaps how you might want to divide something with someone. You're in a sensible frame of mind!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

	1	2	4					
	7		2			1	4	9
	6	3	1			5		8
						3	5	4
	4			9			6	
1	2	5						
2		4			6	7	1	
7	5	6			1		8	
					7	4	3	

Difficulty Level ★

10/29

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

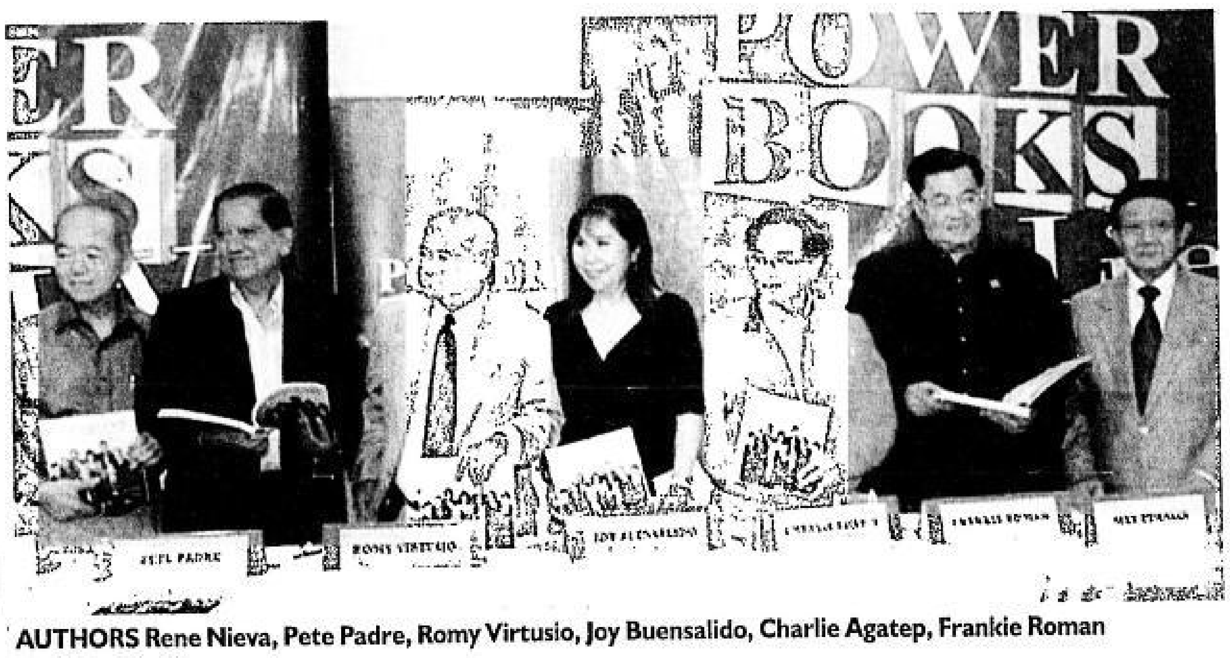
Answer to previous puzzle

4	5	8	9	3	7	1	6	2
3	6	9	1	8	2	5	7	4
2	7	1	6	4	5	9	8	3
1	3	5	7	9	8	2	4	6
7	9	4	3	2	6	8	5	1
8	2	6	5	1	4	3	9	7
6	8	7	2	5	3	4	1	9
5	1	3	4	7	9	6	2	8
9	4	2	8	6	1	7	3	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

10/28

NATIONAL Book Store's, Socorro Ramos



AUTHORS Rene Nieva, Pete Padre, Romy Virtusio, Joy Buensalido, Charlie Agatep, Frankie Roman and Max Edralin

Pioneer PRs tell their stories

A. VIVID MEMOIR AND HOW-TO collection that helps part the curtains of a profession that is still scarcely understood as it is celebrated, "How to Make It in PR: PR Veterans Tell Their Stories," edited by Romeo Virtusio, was recently launched at PowerBooks Live! in Greenbelt 4.

PR pioneers Charlie A. Agatep, Joy L. Buensalido, Max J. Edralin, Rene E. Nieva, Pete A. Padre Jr., Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, Frankie S. Roman, Oscar S. Villadolid and Romeo P. Virtusio provide personal accounts of their careers through engaging, sometimes amusing stories of various standout campaigns, the mentors they've learned from, and the values they have lived by.

HOW TO MAKE IT IN PR
PR Veterans Tell Their Stories

The collection also features a foreword by former J. Walter Thompson chair J.J. Calero, who says: "A great wealth of experiences is contained in these pages. This book is recommended for anyone who is in the communications business."

Earlier, Context Communications and the International Public Relations Association (Ipra) Philippine Chapter (which counts six members among the authors) had done a mini launch attended only by a few of the authors, their immediate families, J.J. Calero, and Ipra members Millie Dizon and Angel Limgenco.

A bigger and public book launch was jointly sponsored by publisher Context Communications International Inc. and Ipra Philippine Chapter at PowerBooks, which was graced by National Book Store matriarch Socorro "Nanay" Ramos.

The event was well-attended by Ipra members such as Butch Raquel of GMA 7, also the president of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP); Karen Villanueva of Merck, Sharp & Dohme; Milen de Quiros of Full Circle Communications; Edd Fuentes of Fuentes Publicity Network Inc.; Richard Burgos of IBM Philippines; and Bobby Manzano.

Other notable public relations and communications practitioners present were Tessa Jazmines of Larc & Asset; Yoly Villanueva-Ong of Campaigns & Grey; Jingjing Romero of Stratos; Noel Nieva of Perceptions; Suzette Defensor of First Foods Inc.

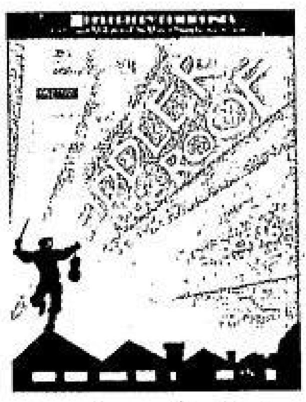
Other guests included family and friends of the authors such as Lulu Virtusio; Arel and Dessa Virtusio; Audrey Agatep-General, Monique Agatep-Ignacio; Rose Padre, Linds Edralin-Boughton; Dr. Adrian Buensalido, Monique, Jocel and Jason Buensalido; Geny Nieva, Oskie and Wendy Nieva; Ces Onrubia-Jacinto, lawyer Dick Ferrer of Makati Medical Center; Flor Gozon Tarriela, Billie Tablante, Rowena Blas, Alice and Audie Orleans, Grace Lumawig, Gunter Moral; Lani and Camille Canullas, Christine Canullas-Roa; Kitten Perez and Chet Martinez of Figaro.

The book is available at PowerBooks and National Book Store. Call 7244774.

Rep restages 'Fiddler on the Roof'

TO CELEBRATE ITS 40TH year, Repertory Philippines is restaging "Fiddler on the Roof" at Onstage Theater in Greenbelt 1, Makati City.

"It will be nostalgia for many Rep subscribers and there is a whole generation that hasn't seen this musical theater classic," says director Baby Barredo. "Also, the message that it sends is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. Besides, the music is some of the most memorable written for the stage and deserves to be heard again—sung, live, by the warm and funny characters of the story. Apparently both Broadway and West End feel the same way, because it has been revived over and over."



Rep will introduce Tyler Allan Strand as Tevye, the happy milkman and father of five daughters who sings the popular song "If I Were a Rich Man." Miguel Faustmann, one of Manila's finest actors, alternates with him.

Golde, his wife, will be played alternately by Joy Virata and Pinky Marquez, both seasoned musical theater actresses.

Other roles will be played by rising young theater actors Niccolo Manahan, Cris Villonco, Vanessa Paolelli, Cara Barredo, Felix Rivera and Hans Eckstein.

An exciting new talent, Siria Rutstein, makes her first appearance in Manila alternating with Samantha Sewell in the role of Tzeitel, the eldest daughter.

The leads will be supported by a strong ensemble of Rep actors, among them Jaime del Mundo, Bonggoy Manahan, Oliver Usison and Boyd Tinio. Violinist Farida Kabayao is The Fiddler.

Barredo herself makes a cameo appearance as Yente the Matchmaker, alternating with Jay Glorioso.

Barredo and Robbie Guevara co-direct and Julie Borromeo choreographs.

The music will be played by the Manila Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Arturo Molina.

Rep's "Fiddler on the Roof," written by Joseph Stein with lyrics by Sheldon Harnick and music by Jerry Bock, runs Nov. 9-Dec. 16. Opening night will be sponsored by St. Joseph's College, where it all began for Rep 40 years ago.

For ticket information, prices and show dates, call 8870710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com. Tickets are also available at TicketWorld (tel. 8919999).

Musical feast . . .

From page E1

ordinate number of exemplary tones from her.

COYIUTO with cellist Antoni Inacay

Young cellist

Coyiuto's other side as an excellent chamber musician came to the fore in Rachmaninoff's Sonata for Cello and Piano, with young cellist Inacay. It was an even partnership with the cello just as dominating as the piano, neither contradicting or competing with each other.

But the composer being a pianist himself, it did sound in some parts that the sonata had more defining moments for the piano than for the cello. Inacay had exemplary tones in the allegretto part and some ravishing lyrical moments in the andante section. On the whole, Coyiuto and Inacay achieved commendable balance.

As I was rushing to another appointment, I missed the encore numbers and the surprise appearance of the pianist's daughter, Caitlin Alsa, who played Bolling's Veloce from Part 7 of the Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano.

Classical guitarist

Classical guitarist Alvaro Pierri's performances in Montreal got both popular and critical acclaim. He was soloist in Rodrigo's Concerto de Aranjuez with the McGill Chamber Orchestra under Boris Brott.

Earlier, he appeared with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit. La Presse Montreal noted a wonderful collaboration: "Pierri demonstrated not only perfect virtuosity but also extremely creative and nuanced interpretation."

Another critic, Leo Brouwer, noted Pierri had more musical ingredients to offer than Segovia and Bream, and declared: "Pierri is a master of colors, a genuine innovator of interpretation."

This guitar master will be heard in Manila for the first time on Dec. 4 at the Philamlife Theater, courtesy of the Chopin Society of Hong Kong and the Philippine American Life Insurance Company. The same sponsors will bring in the much-awaited return engagement of Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy on Dec. 8 with an entirely new program inspired by dance.

For tickets, call 9007023 or 0906-5104270. Early-buyer discount is still available.

Bach concert

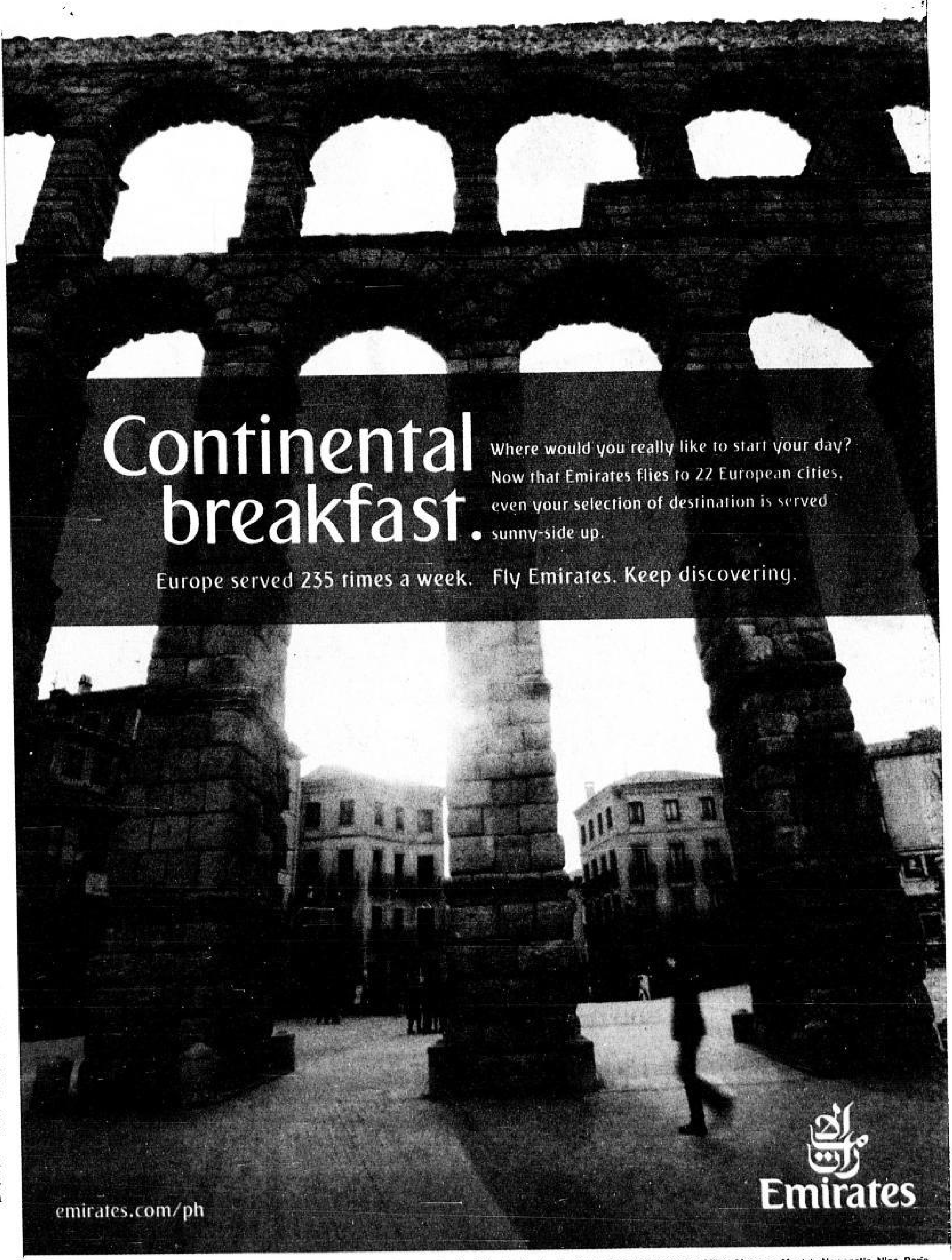
"Back to Bach" featuring Bach concertos for one, two, three and four keyboards will be the attraction at the Francisco Santiago Hall, BDO South Tower, on Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Featured pianists are Najib Ismail, Peter Porticos, Mary Anne Espina, Marsha Nicolas, Naomi Sison, Julie Ann Hallazgo, Jed Balsamo, Mary Anne Choco, Andrew Soriano, Helen Reyes and Allan de la Cruz.

Vienna-based pianist and conductor Aries Caces will lead the UST String Ensemble with Gina Medina as concertmaster.

For tickets, call 7314022.

CLASSICAL guitarist Alvaro Pierri will perform in Manila in December.



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'El Filibusterismo' from Gantimpala Theater

THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF Gantimpala Theater's Four Classics, "El Filibusterismo" based on National Hero José Rizal's novel and made into a play by Jomar Fleras, returns to the stage Nov. 4.

"El Filibusterismo" narrates the return of the protagonist of "Noli Me Tangere," Crisostomo Ibarra, disguised as the wealthy jeweller Don Simoun (Roeder Camañag). Disillusioned by the abuses of the friars and government leaders, Ibarra abandons his beliefs in order to return to his hometown of San Diego and start a bloody revolution.

The cast includes Perry Dizon (Don Custodio/Tata Selo), Jorge Cabullo (Don Tiago/Ben Zayb), Perry Escaño (Kabesang Tales), Kimberly Diaz (Juli), Lani Tapia (Dona Victorina/Madre), Yutaka Yamakawa(Juanito Pelaez/Padre Irene), Bluemark Rocess (Isagani) and Lailanie Anne Tejuco (Paulita Gomez), Jeffrey Camañag (Padre Camorra), Ronald Concepcion (Padre Fernandez) and Billy Parjan (Padre Salvi).

Soxie Topacio directs, with Perry Dizon as assistant director, Roobak Valle as production designer, Andy Villareal as lighting designer, Andrew Alcona as stage manager and Pamela Hundana as production manager. Gantimpala artistic director is Tony S. Espejo.

Performances are on Nov. 4 (7 p.m., Concert at the Park Open Air Auditorium, Luneta, Manila); Nov. 9-11, 23-24 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m., AFP Theater, Quezon City); and Nov. 16-17 (SM Southmall Cinema 6, Las Piñas City).

Call 8995745 or 8963503 for tickets or e-mail gantimpalaproduction@yahoo.com.ph.

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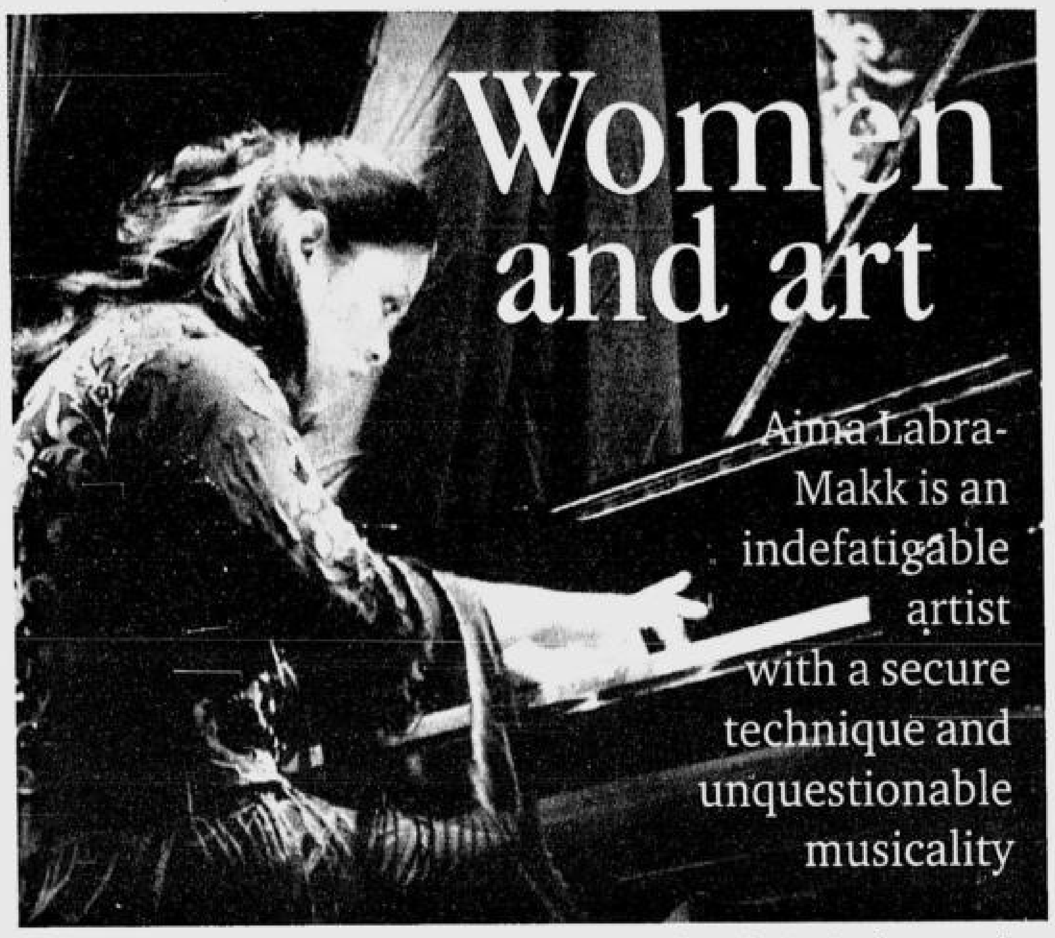
PDI, RayBan to launch "You Could be the Next RayBan Rock Star"

The Philippine Daily Inquirer recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Branded Lifestyle Inc., distributor of RayBan in the Philippines to launch "You Could be the Next RayBan Rock Star." Present during the signing are Pepito Olarte, VP for Advertising of PDI, Rene Reinoso, SVP for Sales and Marketing, PDI, Mylene De Jesus, Sales Officer, PDI, Lal Gopwani, VP of Branded Lifestyle, and Devi Leano, assistant general manager of Branded Lifestyle.



Women and art

Aima Labra-Makk is an indefatigable artist with a secure technique and unquestionable musicality

By Allan Pastrana
Contributor

WHEN, DURING THE ADVENT OF the Industrial Revolution, the pianoforte took its place as one of the unmitigated symbols of the new century, the various schools of pianism came to the fore of diversity in performance.

A more curious division among pianists, however unfounded, is a gender-biased assumption which unfortunately some people are still inclined to believe.

A long time ago, I sat before my first live performance of the Piano Concerto in B-Flat Minor (a staple Tchaikovsky) at the CCP. The featured soloist was a female pianist whose name escaped me, partly due to the impending disappointment I was to get during the entire concert, which was evident enough at the onset, in her opening chords against the blaring "tutti"—that is, if it ever truly reached my ears.

Aima Labra-Makk performed the same concerto years later, and anybody who saw it might have felt anything but shortchanged. Despite the fact that the piano she used that night was an abhorrence, I am quite sure what I heard was as solid and powerful a playing as any male pianist I had ever heard.

Raw energy

Her most recent homecoming concert at the PCI Bank was no exception. The intuitive nature of her playing may easily be mistaken for careless abandon, but soon one notices this raw energy to be a proper channel for insight and exciting musicianship.

She started off with four Scarlatti sonatas, admirably performed in that characteristically simple elegance—concept-wise and sound-wise. This finds close representation in the quiet lyricism of Andras Schiff's Baroque renditions.

Though I usually prefer the rumbling, mechanical playing of a Gould or a Tureck, following that quasi-secco evocation closer to the tradition, Labra-Makk's was far from being just fine. What with that disciplined *leggiero* and a sound treatment of lines, it was a strong combination of beauty and intelligence.

Then there was Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy, which, surprisingly, is rarely performed, at least in this part of the world. There are probably only a handful of pianists who can pull off a Schubert with such economy of intention (because too much intention for me is mere pretense) and a nonchalant manner.

Romantic idiosyncrasies can be distasteful in Schubert, that she is much aware of. Her lyricism was perfectly tapered, the sound falling into place with an elegant ease that complements her playing in the more virtuosic parts.

She opened the second part of her program with Rachmaninoff's Études-Tableaux, Op.33. This is where the obvious marriage of technique and art manifests itself.

Naturally, these studies allow any performer to showcase that two-fold aspect of any aesthetic endeavor, and, Labra-Makk went through every piece with deftness and a clear concept of the desired sound and effect.

Admittedly, though, the level of intensity she started with got lost somewhere in the last number (the one in C-Sharp Minor), not necessarily dwindling to that unfortunate spot but somehow, rather unexpectedly, lacking the immediacy and vigor of her usual attack.

Unmatched

What more can the enthusiast ask for, when after all the pieces mentioned above were masterfully played (I daresay) by one of the few local pianists who might have truly deserved an "international" career, should decide to close her program with Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No.3?

Here, Labra-Makk's energy was unmatched. That fiery playing was very much familiar as I suddenly remembered my first experience of her playing in a small concert at UST, at a time when I never thought anybody could play Liszt's "Dante" sonata the way she did it.

The sadistic tendency of an audience is not a myth at all. Kissin's endless encores in his BBC PROMS concert was never a myth.

Aima Labra-Makk is probably the most generous I've seen when it comes to encores. She could be doing a full program of more than considerable difficulty and still indulge the audience by playing Schubert-Liszt's Soirées de Vienne: Valse-Caprice No.6.

Since the audience was clamoring for more after her riveting rendition of the Prokofiev sonata, she played Liszt's "Tarantelle" from "Venezia e Napoli" then followed it with Chopin's posthumous Nocturne in C-Sharp Minor.

Aima Labra-Makk is an indefatigable artist with a secure technique and unquestionable musicality. Like a modern-day Scheherazade, she makes artistic communication a matter of patience and the almost necessary shock or stress thereafter, which renders the entire process capable of expressing consummate beauty as well as extraordinary genius.

I suddenly recalled Emily Dickinson's standard for judging literature, which fittingly describes the experience of watching this amazing pianist anytime: "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

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Sam has nothing more to say on Lolit exposé

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

SAM MILBY TEXTED ME ALL THE way from Canada regarding his rift with **Lolit Solis**: "I have nothing more to say. I've said my piece on TV. I just want to focus now on my tour here in Canada."

Sam is one of the most *palabati* celebs I've met. Whenever we happen to be in the same event, he would approach me just to say hi. So if Tita Lolit claims she saw Sam with Piolo at Sofitel, it's so out of character for Sam not to greet her at all.

Tita Lolit should have taken their pic with her cell phone camera for prima facie evidence. Prove it or move it. Pray tell, Sofitel!

What's cooking?

Heard that beauty queen **Josephine Canonizado**, who recently gave birth to her love child with a married action star, is now taking up culinary arts.

Is she planning to shift her business from a beauty parlor (financed by the action star) to a bistro? Or does she just want to whip up some fancy dishes for her paramour?

As they say, the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But how can his martyr-wife stomach all that?

Guess who

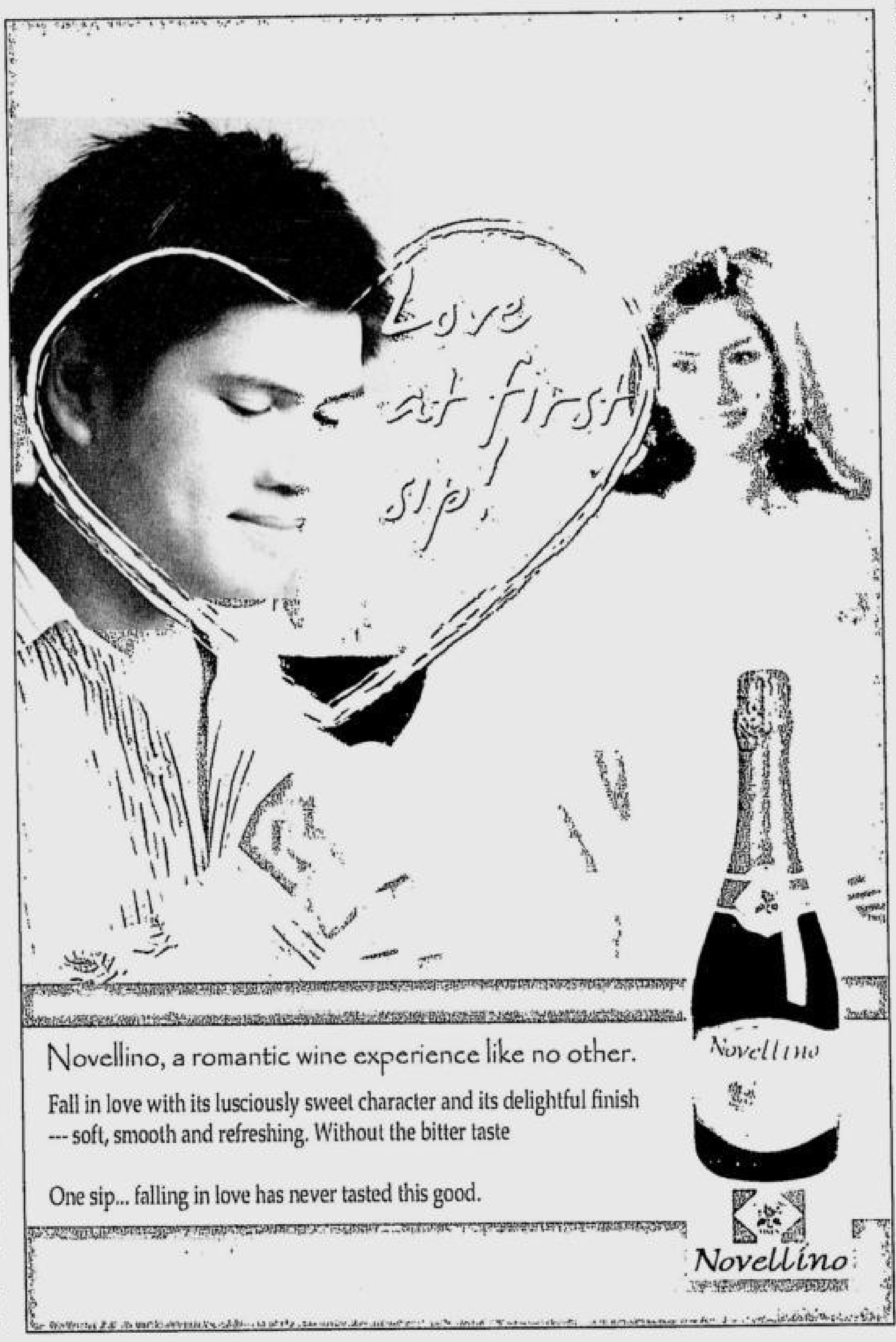
A popular actor and a male modeling search winner are gymmates. People in the know insist that their closeness goes on behind closed doors.

Even before the model won the search, the actor already showed interest in him. Aside from burning calories together in the gym, could passion be burning between them too?

Jampacked 'Flow'

Had a blast at the third anniversary

SAM/F4



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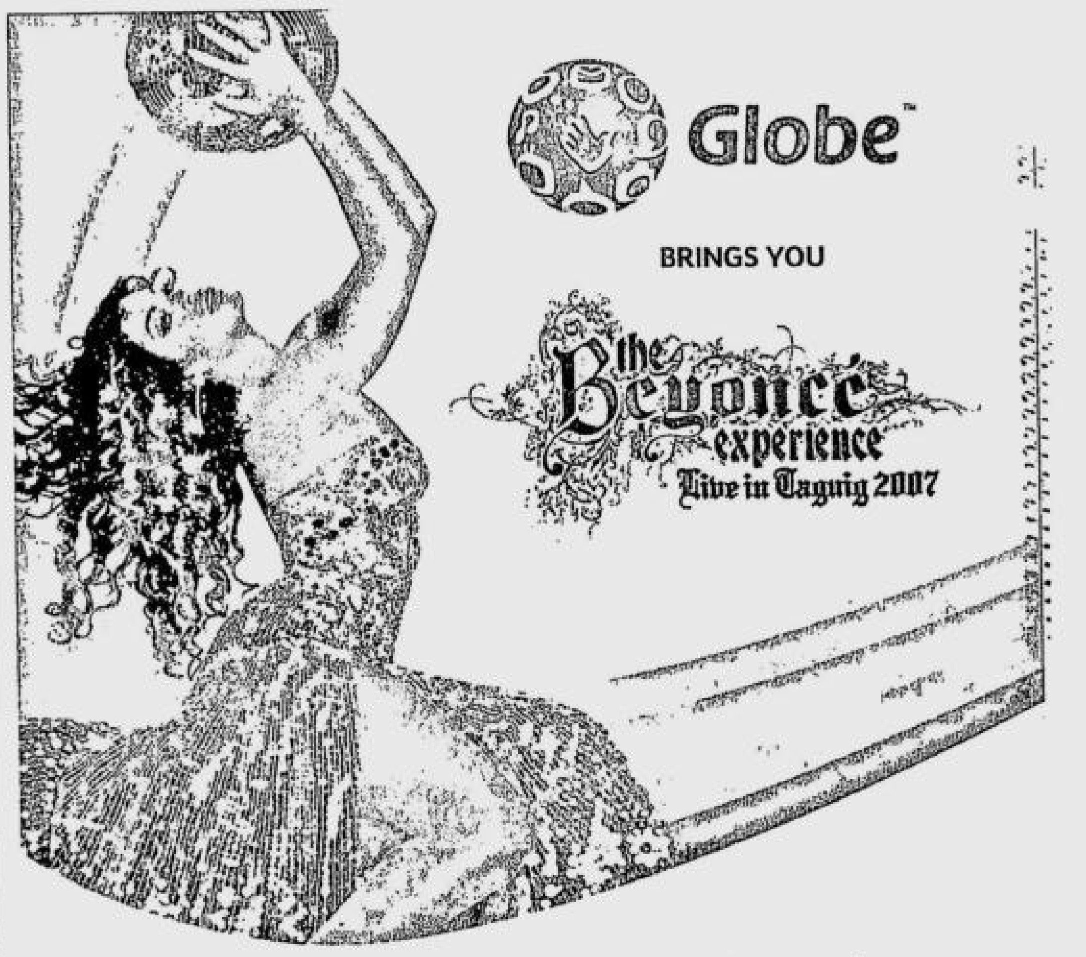

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Night Market Area
Jam Sessions on Nov.17 with Julianne
Sessionistas Showdown on Nov.23 with Sinosikat?
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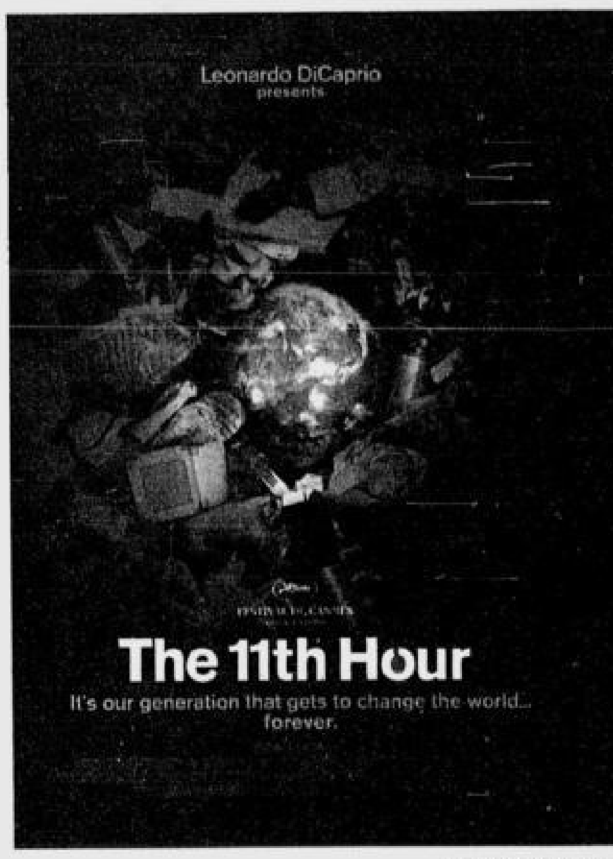
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1 RENDITION
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 MR. WOODCOCK
5 UNREST
6 THE GAMEPLAN

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1 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
3 MR. WOODCOCK
4 STARDUST
5 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
6 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
7 THE GAMEPLAN
8 RENDITION
9 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST
10 KUNG FU FIGHTER
11 UNREST
12 NO RESERVATIONS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 RENDITION
2 STARDUST
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
5 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
6 THE GAMELAN
7 ROGUE ASSASSIN
8 KUNG FU FIGHTER
9 UNREST
10 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
11 11TH HOUR
12 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 RENDITION
2 MR. WOODCOCK
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 RESIDENT EVIL 3
5 HIGHLANDER V
6 STARDUST
7 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
8 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
9 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
10 KUNG FU FIGHTER
11 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST
12 THE GAMEPLAN

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
2 THE GAMEPLAN
3 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
4 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST
5 APAT DAPAT,DAPAT APAT
6 RESIDENT EVIL
7 RENDITION
8 HIGHLANDER V
9 STARDUST
10 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 THE GAMEPLAN
2 RENDITION
3 UNREST
4 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
5 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
6 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE GAMEPLAN
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 UNREST
4 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST
5 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
6 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
7 STARDUST
8 RENDITION
9 RESIDENT EVIL 3

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
2 HIGHLANDER V
3 THE GAMEPLAN
4 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING

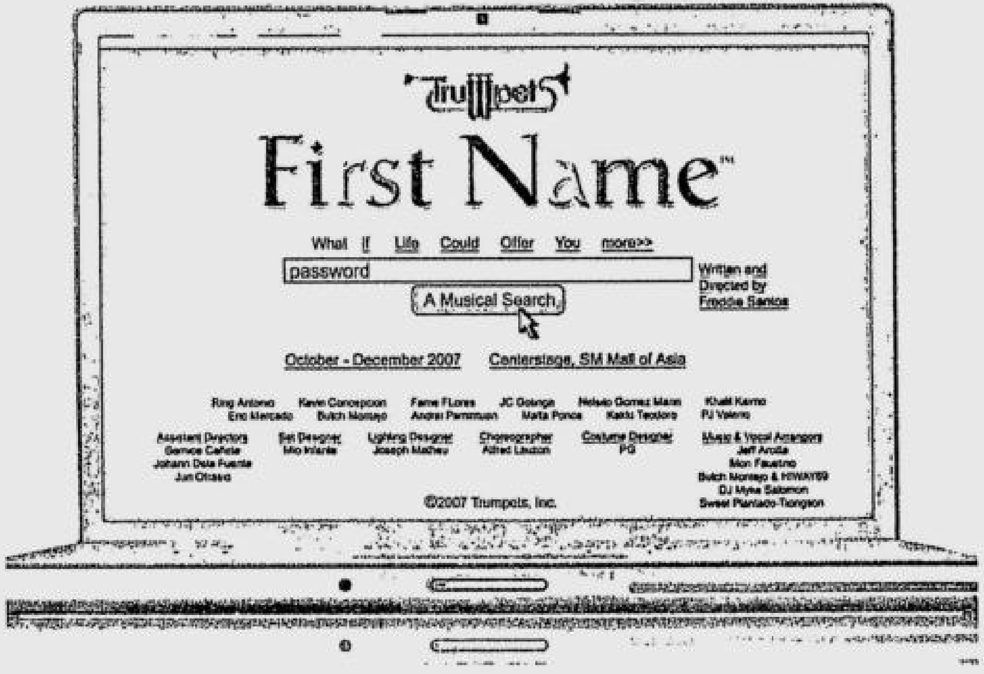
SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 THE GAMEPLAN
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
3 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
5 UNREST
6 **RESERVED**
7 STARDUST
8 RENDITION
9 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
10 KUNG FU FIGHTER
11 RETRIBUTION
12 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333201-04
1 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
2 RISE
3 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
4 NO RESERVATIONS

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
2 RENDITION
3 MR. WOODCOCK
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 HIGHLANDER V
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
4 THE GAMEPLAN

SM CINEMA CENTERStage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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 RENDITION
2 STARDUST
3 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
4 RETRIBUTION
5 RESIDENT EVIL 3
6 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
7 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
8 OCTOBER FRIGHT FEST

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
3 STARDUST
4 RETRIBUTION
5 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
6 EVENING

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 SHOOT EM' UP
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 NO RESERVATIONS
4 RESIDENT EVIL 3

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 DECEMBER BOYS
3 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
4 THE HOST

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 RETRIBUTION
4 WEDDING DAZE
5 EVENING
6 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 DECEMBER BOYS
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 DECEMBER BOYS/ I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 RISE
4 SHOOT EM' UP

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 STARDUST
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 HIGHLANDER V
4 MR. WOODCOCK

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 NO RESERVATIONS
2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
3 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
4 RESIDENT EVIL 3

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 SHOOT EM' UP
2 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
3 NO RESERVATIONS
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
5 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
6 STARDUST

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 STARDUST
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 RETRIBUTION
4 SKINWALKERS

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 NO RESERVATIONS
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 RETRIBUTION
4 RESIDENT EVIL 3
5 DECEMBER BOYS
6 **RESERVED**
7 **RESERVED**
8 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 STARDUST
2 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
3 SHOOT EM' UP
4 FRIGHT FEST/ EVENING
5 RETRIBUTION
6 CARTOON NETWORK/ DECEMBER BOYS
7 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
8 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 STARDUST
3 WEDDING DAZE
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

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ALAN RICKMAN
RACHEL HURD-WOOD
DUSTIN HOFFMAN
PERFUME
THE STORY OF A MURDERER

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Based on the best selling novel

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THE STORY OF A MURDERER

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"SENSUOUS."
Lisa Schwarzbaum, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

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Half his size, twice the trouble
...and she's moving in.

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Walt Disney Pictures

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glorietta Greenbelt TriNoma

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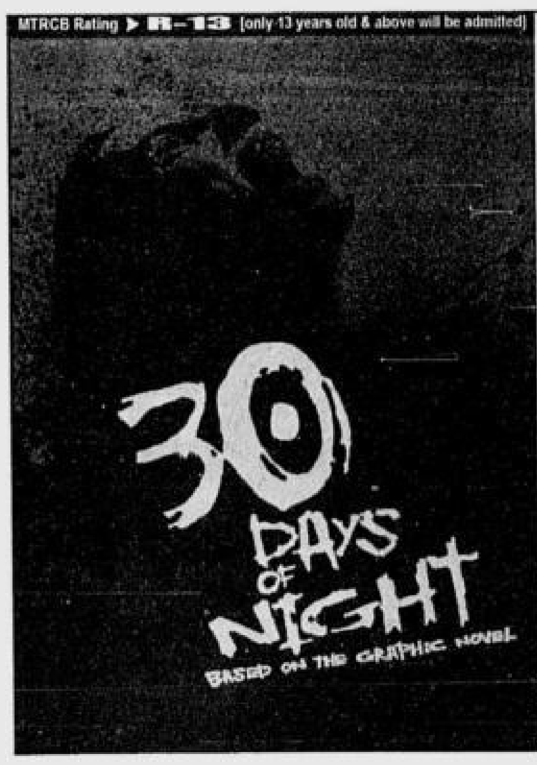
923 JOEY

MTRCB Rating ▶ R-13 [only 13 years old & above will be admitted]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BASED ON THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

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Hot Hollywood actor and recent Philippines visitor Josh Hartnett stars as the embattled Sheriff Eben in 30 DAYS OF NIGHT, based on the groundbreaking graphic novel by Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith.

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UNREST 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	**GAMEPLAN** 12:10 / 2:30 /4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	**BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL** 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
RENDITION 12:30 / 3:30 / 6:30 / 9:30	**LUST CAUTION** 12:10 / 3:10 / 6:10 / 9:10	**APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT** 12:50 / 5:30 / 9:40	
MR WOODCOCK 1.50 / 4.10 **KNOCKED UP** 6.30 / 9.20	**RESIDENT EVIL : EXTINCTION** 3:10 / 7:50 **THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING** 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	**STARDUST** 12:35 / 3:30 / 6:25 / 9:20	**BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL** 4:00 / 9:00 **THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING** 1:30 / 6:30

NMALL CINEMAS

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	**UNREST** 1:40 / 3:55 / 6:10 / 8:25

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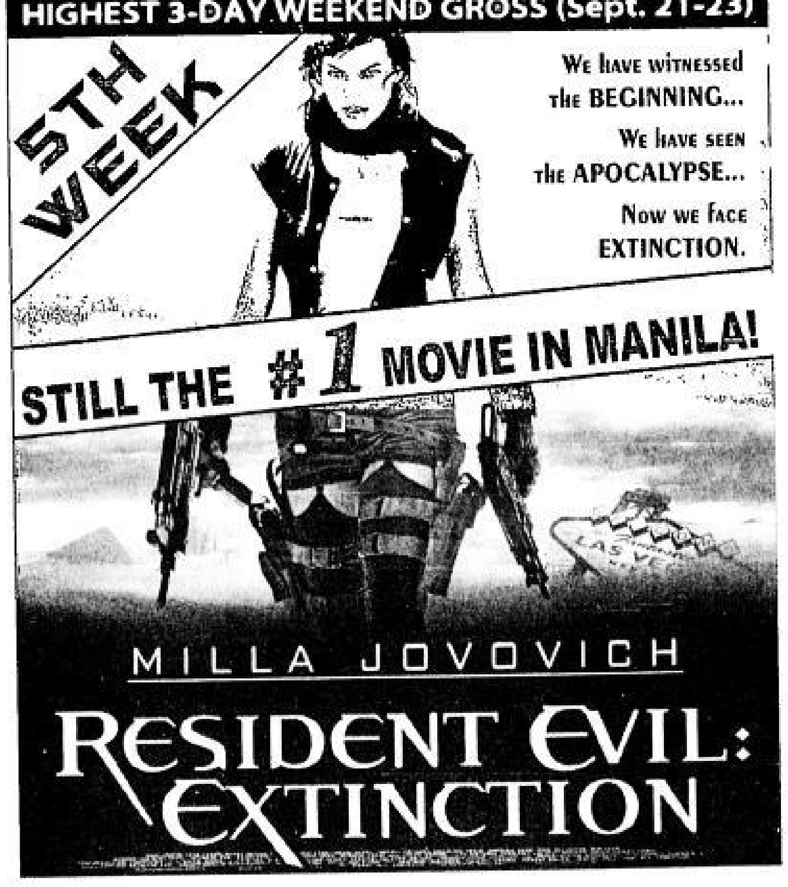
HIGHEST 3-DAY WEEKEND GROSS (Sept. 21-23)


5TH WEEK
We have witnessed the BEGINNING...
We have seen the APOCALYPSE...
Now we face EXTINCTION.
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LAS VEGAS

MILLA JOVOVICH

RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION

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GREENHILLS

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	**UNREST** 11:15 , 1:35 , 3:50 6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35	R-13
CINEMA 2	**BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL // STARDUST** 10:30 , 12:30 , 3:00 // 5:00 , 7:50 , 10:35	PG-13 // GP

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE
GREENHILLS

...a dinetertainment for all!

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CINEMA 3	**GAMEPLAN** 11:00 , 1:20, 3:40 6:00 , 8:20 , 10:35	GP
CINEMA 4	**RENDITION** 10:30 , 1:30 , 4:30 7:30 , 10:30	R-13
CINEMA 5	**LUST CAUTION** 10:35 , 1:35 , 4:35 7:35 , 10:35	R-18

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM	November 9&10 ,16&17, 23&24 November 15 , 2007	" Into the Woods " musical Retrospect	8:00 PM 8:00 PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	Oct. 31 / Nov 7,14,15 21,22, 28 &29	Cerrudo Classico	8.00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC 116

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To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text **eastwood** and send to **2948** for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call:
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GUARANTEED SEATS

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	**THE GAMEPLAN** 1:15, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:05 G	
2	**RENDITION** 1:40, 4:35, 7:30, 10:35 R-13	
3	**BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL** 1:40, 4:00 PG-13	**STARDUST** 7:55, 10:40 G
4	**LUST, CAUTION** 1:25, 4:35, 7:45, 10:55 R-18	

OPENS NOVEMBER 7

MTRCB Rating ▶ G | All Ages Admitted

Half his size, twice the trouble
...and she's moving in.
Sneak Previews TODAY!

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WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS

THE GAMEPLAN

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DAPAT KALIMUTAN ANG PROBLEMA.
DAPAT MONG PANOORIN.
KAHIT APAT NA BESES AY SULIT PA RIN!

Rufa Mae Quinto
Eugene Domingo
Pokwang
Candy Pangilinan
Apat Dapat
DAPAT APAT
FRIENDS 4 LYF AND DEATH

Also Starring JOHN LAPUS DJ DURANO JOCK ISRAEL MARISSA DELGADO CHRISTIAN VASQUEZ KIRAY VINCE SALDANA CHESTER NOLLEDO ANDREW SCHIMMER KIAN KAZEMI ASHLEY GRUENBERG VICE GANDA RYCHARD EVERLY

Directed by WENN V. DERAMAS

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Budget DZRH VIVA

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LUST CAUTION

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AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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GLORIETTA 1	1 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	2 RENDITION	3 THE UNREST	4 THE GAMEPLAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 THE GAMEPLAN	2 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING	3 THX BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 PERFUME: THE STORY OF A MURDERER	5 FRIGHTFEST	6 RENDITION	7 LUST CAUTION
GREENBELT 1	1 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	2 RENDITION		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX RENDITION GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE GAMEPLAN GUARANTEED SEATS	5 LUST CAUTION GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GAMEPLAN	2 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL		
	3 RENDITION	4 THE 11TH HOUR	5 LUST CAUTION	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DECEMBER BOYS	2 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	3 EVENING	4 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GAMEPLAN	2 LUST CAUTION		
	3 RENDITION	4 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	5 THE UNREST	
TRINOMA	1 LUST CAUTION	2 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL	3 THE UNREST GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 STARDUST	6 RENDITION	7 THX THE GAMEPLAN GUARANTEED SEATS	

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AT THE MALLS

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Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	Halloween Treat: Dorothy and the Witches of Oz - A Trumpets Musical Theater Performance October 28; 5pm to 6pm; Glorietta Activity Center
GREENBELT	Trick or Treat at Greenbelt 3 Park October 25 to 28 and 31
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Dole Pumpkin Carving Contest October 28; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Clear Product Launch October 27 to 28; Activity Center
MARKET! MARKET!	Sesame Street Party November 2; Activity Center
Glorietta Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids August - December 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	HYBRIDITY: Mark Lewis Higgins September 18 to October 28, 2007; Ground Floor For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Noma	Sesame Street Party October 28; Activity Center

HALLOWEEN FILM FESTIVAL

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THE SERPENT & THE RAINBOW
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Screening Schedules
12:30pm,
5:30pm, 10:30pm
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18

VAMPIRE IN BROOKLYN
A vampire from the Caribbean fulfilling a prophesy to rejoin his vampire queen, who turns out to be a Brooklyn cop.

Screening Schedules
3:00pm, 8:00pm

Vampire in Brooklyn

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Vina Morales on love life: Wait and see

By Marinel R. Cruz

ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF HER relationship with Chinese businessman Cedric Lee, Vina Morales says she is adopting a wait-and-see attitude.

"There are still a lot of questions that I want answered," she tells INQUIRER Entertainment at the launch of Star Records' latest dance album, "Supahdance." But, she adds, "If you're asking if we're happy and in love, the answer is yes—*sobra, sobra*."

In March, Vina announced she was breaking up with Cedric on the show biz talk program "The Buzz." She said the relationship had become "very complicated."

To this date, Cedric's marriage has yet to be annulled. He and his wife Judy have two kids, aged 11 and 8.

Now, Vina says, she's awaiting the outcome of the annulment procedure.

She is confident about where she stands. "I don't look at it as a big problem. I'd rather concentrate on my career—and it's been going well lately," she insists.

Vina recently won the Asean Ikon music competition held in Kuala Lumpur. She brought home the Best Solo Performer trophy, plus $25,000 in cash, a recording contract and concert bookings all over the region.

"I'm thankful that my fans care more about my career than my love life. *Maski magulo ang* personal life *ko, okay lang sa kanila*," said Vina.

"Supahdance" is a various-artists album co-produced by ASAP Music and Star Records, and features 14 dance mixes performed by Kapamilya talents. Apart from Vina, the other artists are Gerald Anderson, Gabriel Valenciano, Iya Villania, Vhong Navarro, Saicy Aguila and Mickey Perz, Kitty Girls, Full Circle Teens, "Wowowee" ASF Girls, Ultimate Dance Four and Kokey.

Sam has . . .

From page F1

of Flow, Iloilo's premier party place. It was a three-day celebration dubbed "F3 (Fun for the Famous)."

The music was so cool that I almost forgot I wasn't in Manila. Kudos to my beloved friends Cedric and Engel Loring for redefining the party scene in Batchoy country.

The event coincided with the birthday bash of Iloilo's fab Philippine Tatler correspondent Nonoy Ybiernas.

Among the Ilonggo partyphiles in the jampacked fete, it was the gay cousin of **Gretchen Barretto** (Jasmine Castelo) who stood out.

Jasmine wore a black Dolce & Gobanna gown. A fashion designer who studied in Paris and London, Jasmine shows that being classy runs in Greta's family.

Flow is the place to be in Iloilo—booze and fun are overflowing there!

New endorser

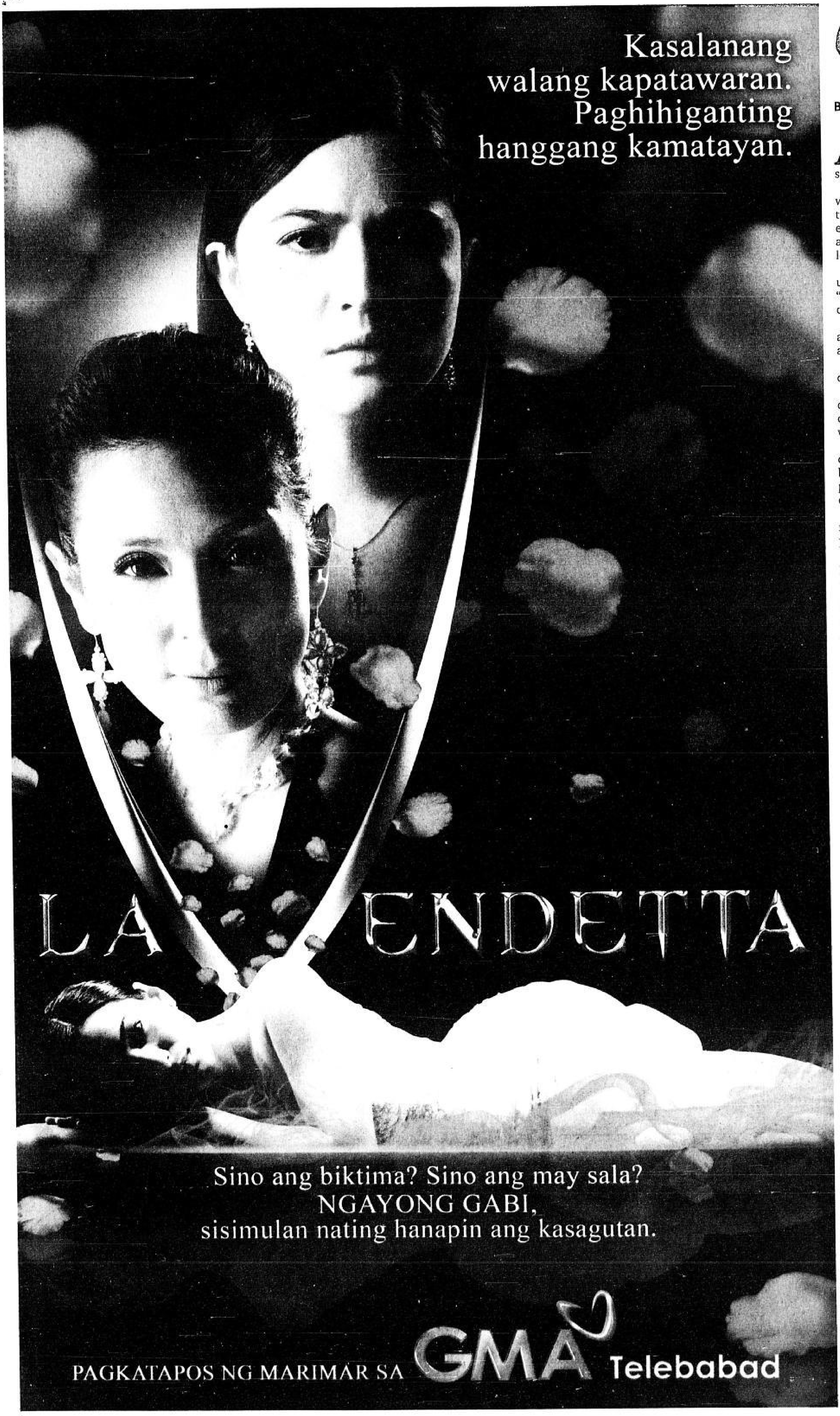
Anne Curtis is the new face of Freeway—a dynamic fashion brand for hip, young women. Just like the clothing line, Anne constantly reinvents herself. She can be girly and classic, or turn into a rocker chick.

Anne will first model the holiday collection designed by Mel Orlina (www.freeway.net.ph).

Anne is always dressed for the part but when, oh when, will she wear her heart on her sleeve? Isn't there really SAMthing going on between her and Sam Milby?

Personal: *Madamo gid na salamat* to Engel and Ced Loring, Nath Pugales, Paulene Banusing, the staff of Del Rio Hotel especially John Norman dela Cruz, and Sarabia Manor Hotel for an overdose of Ilonggo hospitality. Iloilo will always be my second home because of all of you. *Palangga ko gid kamo!*

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com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ENTERTAINMENT

ALL TOGETHER NOW. Former "Philippine Idol" contenders (from left) Apple Chui, Ken Dingle and Arms Cruz in chorus JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Life after 'Idol'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Three finalists of the singing competition's first season team up to form a vocal group

THERE IS LIFE AFTER "Philippine Idol," according to the reality show's finalists Apple Chiu, Ken Dingle and Arms Cruz.

Among the Top 12, the three were coincidentally booted out one after the other on the show's first season last year on ABC 5.

Arms left on the 8th, Apple on the 7th and Ken on the 6th week.

"It was like a sign from God that we were meant to be together," jests Arms.

Months after the show, the trio, along with other batchmates, would often hang out, watching movies and eating out together.

Soon enough, "Idol" writer Paolo Bustamante thought of putting the trio together in a vocal group called AKA, with Jun Lacanienta (formerly of Mulatto) as musical director.

The Top 12 contestants always keep in touch, says Apple. "We support each other."

"We watch each other's shows," Arms agrees.

"Quite recently, we visited the 'SOP' set to watch the launch of [fellow 'Idol' finalist] Jan [Nieto]," Ken recounts. "Jan was a big help when we were rehearsing for our AKA gigs."

In fact, Jan surprised his friends by showing up at AKA's interview with INQUIRER Entertainment at Mr. Rockefeller resto in Greenbelt 2.

They share singing assignments with each other, too.

"A recent show in Batangas was arranged by [fellow finalist] Drae Ybañez," Apple relates.

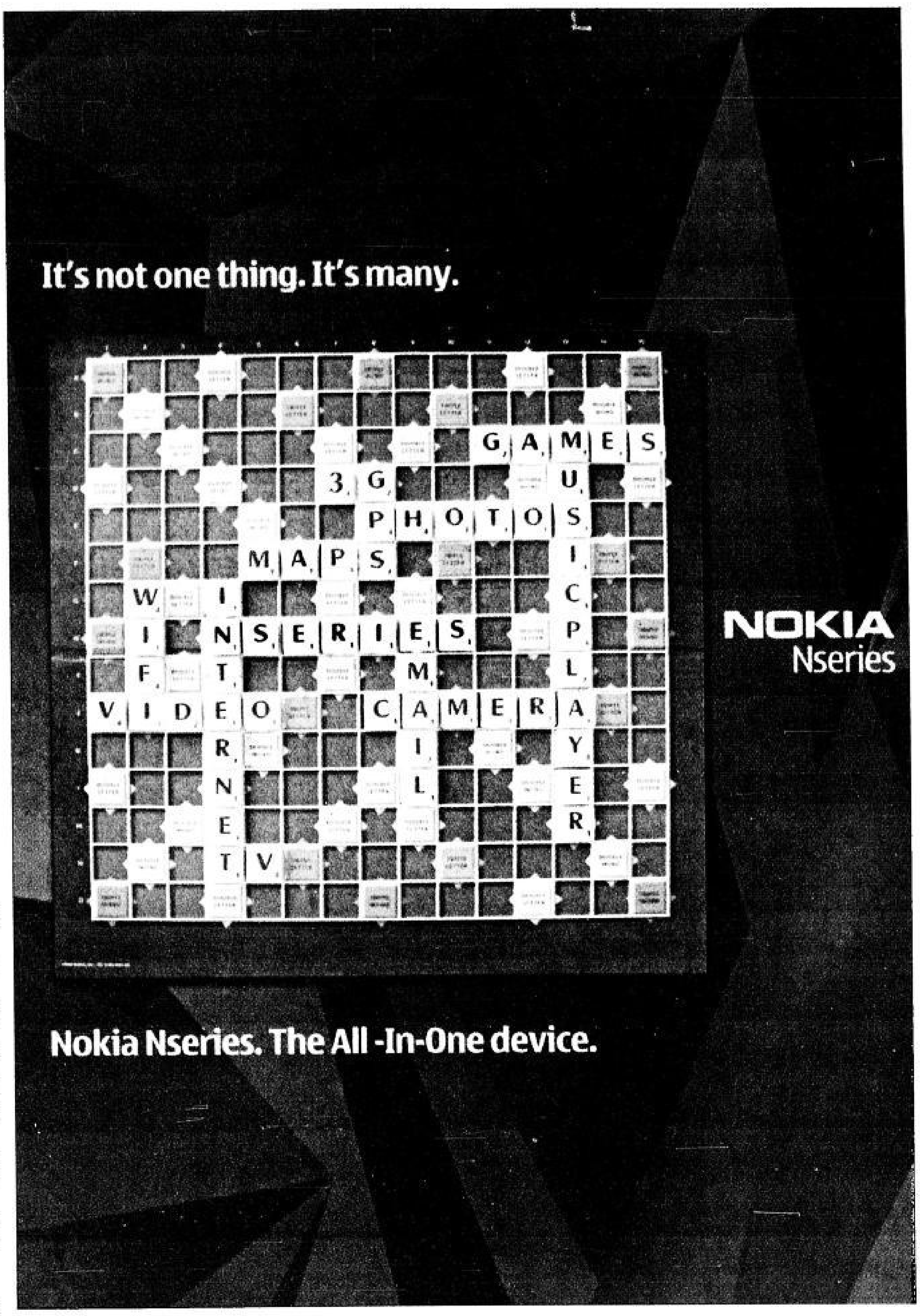
For Ken and Arms whose relatives are far away (Ken's in Australia; Arms' in Zamboanga), their "Idol" batchmates eventually became their surrogate family during and after the competition.

"We were together for nine months, through all the trials. We went through a lot," Arms recounts.

Apple was downed by dengue right before the first performance night; Ken, by throat infection in the heat of the competition.

"It was due to the pressure," Ken explains.

LIFE/G3



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5 BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL
6 THE SEEKER : DARK IS RISING
7 NO RESERVATION
8 KNOCKED UP
9 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
10 KUNG FU FIGHTER

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

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2 (DOLBY) APAT DAPAT , DAPAT APAT
3 (DOLBY) RENDITION
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

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2 RESERVED
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4 UNREST
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3 STURDUST
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4 THREE
5 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT

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2 KNOCKED UP
3 DECEMBER BOYS
4 RESIDENT EVIL

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GALLERIA

1 STARDUST • THX
1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

2 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 MANILA PRIDE FEST
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 LUST CAUTION
12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00

5 RENDITION
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 GAMEPLAN
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 UNREST
12:40 3:005:20 7:40 10:00

8 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
1:

9 RESIDENT EVIL 3
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00

10 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

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Full Length Feature
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ERMITA

1 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 RENDITION
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

4 UNREST
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

5 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

6 LUST CAUTION
10:40 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

7 GAMEPLAN

METRO EAST

1 GAMEPLAN

2 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

3 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

4 UNREST
12:15 2:30 4:45 7:00 9:10

5 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 LUST CAUTION
11:40 2:40 5:40 9:00

7 RESIDENT EVIL 3
11:40 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00

8 RENDITION
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

NOVALICHES

1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 GAMEPLAN
3 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

PIONEER

1 RENDITION
12:50 3:20 5:50 8:20

2 GAMEPLAN

3 LUST CAUTION
11:10 2:20 5:30 8:40

4 UNREST
12:25 3:10 5:55 8:40

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P80/ P90 (049) 837-0907

1 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
2 NO RESERVATIONS
3 SHOOT 'EM UP
4 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
5 RESERVED

LIPA
(043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 RESIDENT EVUL 3
2 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
3 DECEMBER BOYS
4 KNOCKED UP

DASMARINAS
Ticket Price: P80/ P90 (046) 416-4332

1 SHOOT 'EM UP
2 NO RESERVATIONS
3 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
4 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT

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1 BUTTERFLY on a WHEEL
2 THE SEEKER: Dark is Rising
3 APAT APAT DAPAT APAT
4 HIGHLANDER

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1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
3 RETRIBUTION
4 STARDUST

TARLAC

1 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
2 THREE
3 KNOCKED UP

STARMILLS

1 WEDDING DAZE
2 STARDUST
3 APAT DAPAT, DAPAT APAT
4 THE SEEKER:.Dark is Rising
5 RETRIBUTION
6 RESIDENT EVIL 3

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1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 WEDDING DAZE
3 indieSine: STILL LIFE
4 STARDUST
5 KNOCKED UP
6 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT

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1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 RETRIBUTION
3 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
4 KNOCKED UP
5 DECEMBER BOYS
6 NO RESERVATIONS

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STARDUST - G 12:40,2:55,5:15 THE SEEKER: THE DARK IS RISING G 7:50,10:10	BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL PG13 1:40,3:50,6.00,8:10	GAME PLAN G 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30
LUST CAUTION R18 1:00,4:10,7:20,10:30	UNREST R13 1:30,3:40,5:50,8:00	RENDITION R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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② RENDITION
MTRCB R-13
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③ LUST CAUTION
MTRCB R-18 12:00, 3:10, 6:20, 9:30

④ BUTTERFLY ON A WHEEL (PG-13)
12.40, 3:00
STARDUST
(GP) 6.40, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE
THE GAME PLAN (GP)
12 00, 2 30, 5 00, 7 30, 10:00

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cine europa 10

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October 27 (Saturday)

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Taming of the Shrew	2:30 PM
Carol's Journey	5:00 PM
Jalla! Jalla!	7:15 PM
Meeting the Enemy	9:15 PM

October 28 (Sunday)

Summer with the Ghost	12:00 PM
Dead Man's Hand	2:00 PM
Fanny & Alexander	4:00 PM
The Kiss	7:30 PM
Closely Watched Trains	9:40 PM

October 29 (Monday)

Jalla! Jalla!	12:00 PM
The Leopard	2:15 PM
Facing Windows	5:45 PM
Just Sex & Nothing Else	8:00 PM
Lives of Others	10:00

October 30 (Tuesday)

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg	12:00 PM
Kolya	2:00 PM
The Leap	4:20 PM
La Mome	6:20 PM
FC Venus	9:00 PM

October 31 (Wednesday)

Just Sex & Nothing Else	12:00 PM
Karakter	2:00 PM
Carol's Journey	4:45 PM
Summer in Berlin	7:00 PM
The Leopard	9:15 PM

FREE ADMISSION
Seats on a first come, first served basis.

*Movies are subject to change without without prior notice.

Donald trumps Jolie and Clooney

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHILE PROMOTING HIS NEW BOOK on TV recently, Donald Trump stirred up a hornets' nest of controversy by dissing screen icons Angelina Jolie and George Clooney.

He dismissed Jolie as a previously spaced-out starlet who hated her father, had a "weird" relationship with her brother and an even more far-out one with Billy Bob Thornton, and yet has successfully transformed herself into an international do-gooder and certified protector of disadvantaged women and children.

Clearly, Trump wasn't sold on the genuineness of Jolie's motives for cleaning up her act and thinking of others instead of herself.

As for Clooney, Trump said the actor's "larger than life" screen image was a complete invention.

He recalled that, when he first saw Clooney in the flesh, he was stunned to see how short and small the "world's sexiest man" really was. Ouch.

What was the point to Trump's double-barreled tirade? At face value, he was doing viewers the supreme service of cutting screen icons down to size, the better for them to avoid being taken for a bogus stellar ride. On the *other* hand, the resulting controversy should also enable him to sell more copies of his new book. Ah, so …

Trump is no chump, that's for sure. The big question now is, what will Jolie and Clooney do to get back at him? If they hit back, it would make things hotter—and thus better as far as his book-selling purposes are concerned.

So, their best move is to do—absolutely nothing. That would make the controversy as hot as yesterday's coffee, and the aggrieved stars would end up trumping Trump—for a change.

'The 11th Hour'

Viewers who care for the environment are happy that Leonardo DiCaprio has produced and narrated "The 11th Hour," a full-length documentary on how mankind has ravaged the planet Earth, and what must be done *now* to save the world.

Trouble is, the film is proving to be difficult to track down. Perhaps because it isn't deemed to be popular viewing fare, it is being moved from theater to theater on different days.

We understand the commercial considerations involved, so we urge concerned viewers to look at the movie's "movable feast" screening schedule in newspapers, and catch it as best they can.

This extra step is OK for people concerned about environmental issues to take—but what about the average viewer? He wouldn't care enough to "chase" the movie all over town, so its important message may not reach him. Now, that's a great pity.

Therefore, we urge the film's local distributor to play it on a regular basis in more theaters. To assure him of good business, we also urge teachers to assign "The 11th Hour" as required viewing fare for their students.

Our movie screens are full of so much fluff and stuff that has little positive impact on us. "The 11th Hour" is definitely more significant and important than most productions, so we trust that our theater owners will give it the regular showcase that it deserves.

Why John Ford Coley loves sad songs

By Pocholo Concepcion

THERE WERE TIMES BEtween 1976 to '79 when the Texas-born, pop-rock duo England Dan & John Ford Coley had four of their songs on top of the Billboard chart.

Most Pinoys, regardless of their musical tastes, must have heard these songs on radio: "I'd Really Love to See You Tonight," "Sad to Belong," "We'll Never Have to Say Goodbye Again" and "Love is the Answer."

Initially dismissed as a one-hit wonder, the duo actually had four Top 10s and two Top 20s; was nominated for a Grammy; received triple-platinum and gold records; and released eight albums.

After breaking up in 1981, Coley wrote music for film and TV. He also enjoyed a brief acting stint in the movies. In 1996, he went back to touring and continues to do so, which is why he was in Manila recently for a series of shows—actually his fifth visit … and counting.

Are you writing new songs?

I'm writing some, but I haven't written much recently because I've been gone (on the road) so much, and the kids always want to play tennis.

Can you recall memorable times with Dan?

Dan Seals and I went to high school together, played in the same band, and started England Dan and John Ford Coley in 1971. I wrote a book called "Backstage Pass" but it's not about sex, drugs and rock n roll—more of the funny stuff that happened while we were touring. One night after a show, this lady walked up to me, holding a copy of one of our albums, took me by the hand and said, "My fiancee and I fell in love with your song 'Nights are Forever without You.' We danced to it, he proposed while it was playing, we did everything to that song…" I just said, "Thank you." But then that same woman looked at me and, in a voice that I didn't recognize would come from her, said, "And then he left me. I've hated your song ever since."

One of my most memorable moments by the way occurred right here in Manila. Two years ago, we've just come from a tour of the presidential palace and were sitting in a restaurant in Makati, having dinner. All of a sudden, I heard the loudest explosion I've ever heard in my life. It was the bombs that went off on Valentine's Day and I was about 100 yards away. We played at Hard Rock Café that night.

How do you fight boredom when on tour?

Every now and then, I take my kids with me. I sit in a hotel, watch TV and manage to have a good time, too. But I also take the kids out. I'm a history nut, so I go around and find out what things happened in a particular area. I happen to know a lot of Philippine history from World War II.

What was your greatest fulfillment in the group?

We've had our share of success and earned good money. But that's the past and you can't bring it back. I like looking at where I'm at now and what I'm gonna do in the future. That way, it's exciting for me, it's fun, I still enjoy meeting different people and hearing about their experiences.

TAKE FIVE

One of his favorite tunes is 'Can We Still Be Friends'

What are your musical influences?

I was trained in classical piano and listened to Bach and Beethoven, and also lots of church hymns, Beach Boys, Buffalo Springfield, flamenco … I just soaked it all up. If a song's got a great melody, I jump on it. But if I don't like it, I don't like it.

What don't you like?

I don't like rap. I tend to have a firm opinion about music and my attitude is this: if you like it, you're right. If you absolutely hate it, you're right, too. It's a value judgment.

Whatever happened to Dan?

Dan stays with his brother Jimmy Seals (of Seals & Crofts). Right now, Dan's got lymphoma. I get to talk to his manager and find out how he's doing.

What caused the breakup?

It was time to move on. We were beginning to move in different directions musically. Dan wanted to go in a country-folk type and I didn't. When "Love is the Answer" came out, we thought, okay, this was the time we'd quit while we're on top.

But aren't you into country music now?

No, not so much. I played some country and I love Vince Gill. But I couldn't do what he does. I also love Josh Groban, but if somebody were to ask me to sing what he does, I won't be able to. Even if they held a knife to my throat and say, "We're gonna kill you if you don't," I still wouldn't do it.

What has the music business taught you?

I don't have much regard for the record industry because there were a lot of talented people who were left behind. And I don't like some of the choices they've made and what they've turned the industry into. There's no passion, it's so predictable now.

Are you saying that '70s music was much better?

For me, yes.

Which do you think were the best written songs of that period?

"Can We Still Be Friends" by Todd Rundgren; "The End of the Innocence" by Don Henley; and a sad song by Bonnie Raitt.

Why do you like sad songs?

I don't know, maybe because I'm Irish. I have a lot of Irish blood.

Life after 'Idol'

From page G1

They had no choice but to turn to each other for solace, says Arms.

They insist that they're going through "mixed emotions"—now that "Idol" is moving to GMA 7 on its second season.

Ken clarifies: "But we are mostly happy and excited for the next batch. We know that they'll get good exposure on GMA 7. We're looking forward to their auditions so that we can relive our own experiences."

Any tips for prospective "Idol" aspirants?

"I learned to stay true to myself and my music," Ken says. "And to smile through criticisms."

"You really have to be fit because the contest is a test of endurance. You have to be ready physically, emotionally, spiritually," says Apple.

"I also advise contestants not to read blogs. Avoid negativity because this can take your focus away from your performance," adds Ken.

"One thing I learned from ['Idol' judge] Ryan Cayabyab is to be versatile. To try out other genres apart from the one you're used to," says Arms.

Now that they've turned pro, they can put to good use the lessons of "Idol."

"We explore different genres in our gigs, but we also sing our own kinds of music," says Ken.

AKA performs at Chef and Brewer in Ortigas Center every Monday; at Seventh Note in Makati every Tuesday; and at the Sky Lounge of Diamond Hotel every Thursday.

But will they allow friends and relatives to join the second season of "Idol"?

"I want to encourage my brother Armand," Arms quips. "He was with me when I auditioned last time. He made it to the Top 80. Who knows? He may end up in the Top 12 this time."

MTRCB RATING G GENERAL AUDIENCE ALL AGES ADMITTED
2ND WEEK
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...
COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!

SOMEONE YOU LOVE JUST DISAPPEARED.
NOBODY IS TELLING THE TRUTH.
JAKE GYLLENHAAL REESE WITHERSPOON
RENDITION

Anak TV relaunches Batang Brodkaster

THE ANAK TV GROUP ANNOUNCES THE relaunch of "Batang Brodkaster," which is soliciting video materials written, directed and shot by youths 18-years-old and below using advanced gadgets or simple multimedia cell phones.

Entries should be original one to give minute video materials with themes ranging from serious social issues like the environment or poverty to playful topics about their pastimes, pets and profiles of their favorite persons.

Winning entries will get the chance to be aired on TV and receive gifts from sponsors.

Those interested to join may visit the Southeast Asian Foundation for Children and Television website at www.anaktvweb.com

Deadline for submission of entries is on Nov. 29.

'Sesame' day

Viva Video invites kids to "Play With Me Sesame," a day of learning activities for children featuring Sesame Street characters Elmo, Cookie Monster and Bert and Ernie.

Every purchase of two Sesame Street VCDs or one DVD at any Viva Video outlet entitles buyers to one ticket to the event. Each ticket is good for one child and one guardian.

The event kicks off at the Market Market on Nov. 3 and Glorietta on Nov. 4.

Nick's Halloween

KID FIT

Nickelodeon celebrates Halloween with "Mischief Madness" at the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia on Oct. 31, 3 to 9 p.m.

A haunted school, fun and games, costume contest and Nick characters Dora The Explorer, SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star complete the event.

For tickets, visit participating Toy Kingdom and Toy Express stores and purchase a minimum of P1,000 worth of goods until Oct. 31.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
JOB Market
YOUR CONNECTION TO
BETTER PEOPLE, BETTER JOBS

Safe, sound and southbound.

On the way to the South for a roadtrip? Prepare for a safe, reliable and enjoyable journey all the way to your destination. With a little help from Caltex, the Philippine National Construction Corporation (PNCC) and its partners, going south will now be more secure, convenient and fun for you and your family.

ka-ROAD TRIP
MOTORIST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Oil industry leader Caltex and PNCC will travel with you through Ka-Road Trip mo sa Kaligtasan, a project that will provide travelers going through the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) an ideal journey. Intended as a year-long program, Ka-Road Trip will surely be a traveler's best friend on and off the road as it covers motorist assistance, public awareness on road safety and a Caltex pitstop activation that will surely be a relief for weary travelers.

As you travel southbound this long holiday period, you will notice that being safe doesn't have to be boring. You can have fun while getting the point that safety is important. You will find highway safety messages along the SLEX route such as "Wala pong finish line sa dulo. Drive Safely."

Or how about the line, "Kung gusto magkarera, bumili ka ng kabayo! Drive Safely, kaibigan." PNCC and Caltex, both proponents of safety on and off the road, are looking forward to a trouble-free, accident-free road trip for motorists.

Ka-Road Trip 2007 will kick off with a Pre-Departure campaign on October 21 to 26, focusing on the need to prepare and check the maintenance and safety of vehicles to be used for the road trip ahead. Selected Caltex stations in Metro Manila and nearby provinces will be visibly campaigning and offering their FREE Car Maintenance Check Up. Here's a laundry list of the items that you, as a responsible driver, should check before going on your journey:

You must check for your car's:

FLUID LEVELS	PARTS FUNCTION
- engine oil	- head lights
- coolant reservoir	- brake lights
- brake fluid	- tail lights
- windscreen washer	- signal lights
- battery water, if available	- hazard/warning lights
- power steering fluid, if available	- back-up lights
	- horn
	- tire air pressure
	- spare tire air pressure, you can never be too sure of any incidents
	- tool kit check, these better be complete and better be working
	- early warning device check

These safety checks can be availed at the following Caltex service stations:

And for the peak travel period, in time for the observance of All Saints' Day from late October to early November, when heavy traffic with the influx of motor vehicles is expected, travelers who intend to hit SLEX on October 31 to November 4 will get a shot at a safe and fun-filled journey through a series of travel time safety checks that will surely help them on the long drive ahead.

Travel Time Safety Services

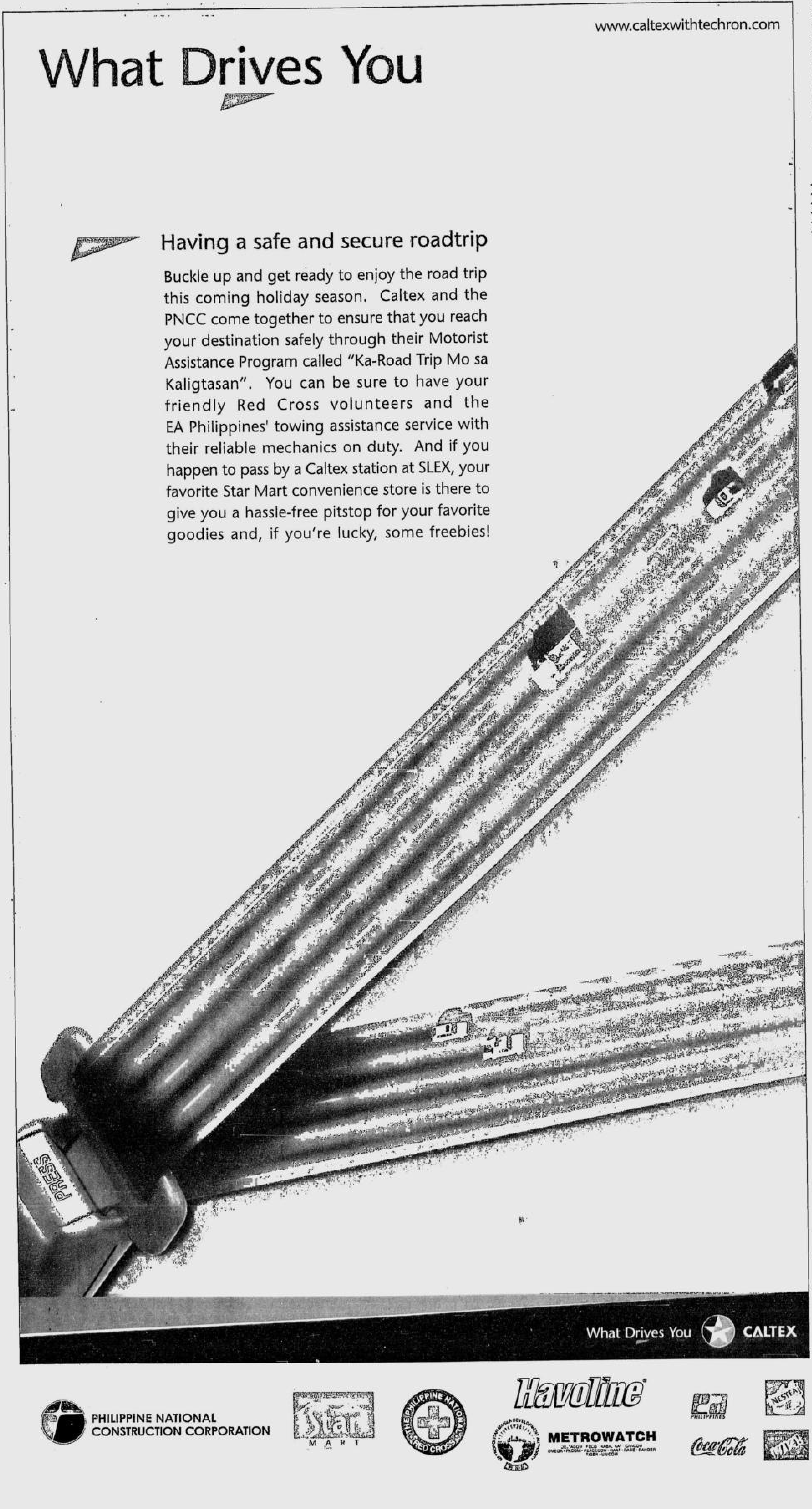
Caltex and PNCC will also provide free emergency assistance during peak hours, particularly on October 27 to November 4. The two companies will coordinate with other groups such as the Philippine National Red Cross, Metrowatch and EA Philippines in setting up service booths and kiosks where medical, towing and mechanical assistance will be provided for stranded travelers.

Recreational Activities

Ka-Road Trip is made even more special by the Caltex Pitstop recreation booths at the SLEX Caltex stations. Caltex will set up vendor kiosks and booths wherein customers can avail of special offers, freebies and prizes from the Star Mart convenience stores. To top it all off, resting motorists will also get to participate in fun games, some of which are related to the Caltex-NBA Caravan promo. And for a limited period, selected toll booth tellers will be giving away coupons that will entitle the motorist to some freebies from the nearby SLEX Caltex stations.

Also, QTV will also be setting up their own 'Bantay Biyahe' booths at the SLEX Caltex stations to monitor the traffic situation and lend assistance to motorists plying the route.

With Caltex, PNCC and your travel plans all set, it's sure to be one stress-free All Saints' Day break. Avail of the free pre-departure services now and get ready to go southbound safe and sound in no time.



www.caltexwithtechron.com

What Drives You

Having a safe and secure roadtrip

Buckle up and get ready to enjoy the road trip this coming holiday season. Caltex and the PNCC come together to ensure that you reach your destination safely through their Motorist Assistance Program called "Ka-Road Trip Mo sa Kaligtasan". You can be sure to have your friendly Red Cross volunteers and the EA Philippines' towing assistance service with their reliable mechanics on duty. And if you happen to pass by a Caltex station at SLEX, your favorite Star Mart convenience store is there to give you a hassle-free pitstop for your favorite goodies and, if you're lucky, some freebies!

What Drives You CALTEX

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION
Star MART
Havoline
METROWATCH
Coca-Cola